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AN

# ANSWER

TO

*Read's*

SIX MONTHS IN A CONVENT,

EXPOSING ITS

FALSEHOODS AND MANIFOLD ABSURDITIES.

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BY THE LADY SUPERIOR.

*not Mary Anne Ursula in religion MRS. St. George.*

WITH SOME

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

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SECOND EDITION.

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## PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

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It is an old adage, that a lie will travel many leagues, while truth is putting on his boots. No doubt such will be the case, with the stories of Rebecca T. Reed, aided as they are by men, who have enlisted in the crusade against Catholics and Catholic Institutions.

The book recently published by her and her disciples, entitled "Six Months in a Convent," is of an extraordinary character. It is believed, that no book professing to state facts, ever issued from the press, containing so little truth, in proportion to the whole matter. Even the title page contains a mistatement, as she was in the Convent only four months and a few days. Her part of the work is ushered in by an introduction, written by one or more of her votaries, equal in quantity of matter to the whole of her narrative; it is like one of those coming events, which "cast their shadows before;" — if the body of it was intended to impose upon the public, the introduction very faithfully aids in the design. There may be some difference, however, in the moral responsibility of the parties, if it be true as the writers of the latter say, that they fully believe every thing stated in the former. If it shall appear, as we believe it will, that Miss R's narrative is a tissue of misrepresentations calculated and designed to destroy the character of the Ursuline Community, the Committee of Publication as they are called, must hang upon one horn of a dilemma. Either they believe it or they do not. If they are honest believers, their understandings are brought into contempt, if not, they are willing accessaries to as wicked a production as ever disgraced the press. The man who can give credence to the alleged conspiracy of Bishop Fenwick, and the Superior to send Miss Reed against her inclination across the country to some place in Canada, or to the story about the bushel of gold, is past the influence of reason. He may be at once delivered over to the class of incurables, without the least danger of mistake.

But we do not believe in their truth in this particular. The man who could write that introduction is not the person to be so easily duped. On the other hand he shows that he wants neither the will nor the capacity to dupe others. The object of this part of the book

is not truth or the public good, or the vindication of private character, as is pretended, but to exasperate the public mind against Catholics and Catholic institutions ; to persecute them through the medium of popular opinion, and drive them from the country as the enemies of true religion and of civil liberty. Not content with seeing the few defenceless and pious females composing the Ursuline Community, driven from their habitation at midnight and their property destroyed ; not satisfied with screening the perpetrators from punishment, and even exhibiting these worthies as public benefactors ; (not in direct terms perhaps but by their acts, and the general scope of their arguments ;) they have now finished another act of the drama, by a most foul attempt to blast the fair character of this Community and its individual members. It has been with a view to accomplish these designs, that the narrative of this weak-minded fanatical female has been given to the public. It was seen that her stories would answer to gull the ignorant and unreflecting portion of the people, and that it would give themselves an opportunity to figure in her train : — they come forward like the Chorus in the old drama, or a Committee of arrangements in modern times, to make the spectacle complete and to fill up the chasms in the chain of fiction and romance. They saw that the narrative must be fortified and the credit of the author sustained in advance, by the machinery of a Committee of Publication, — by consultation with “ sedate and respectable persons, and by *prayerful* consideration of their duty.” Such canting language from the reputed author of the introduction, is a sure presage of an evil design to impose upon the reader, and we shall prove to the meanest capacity, that the avowed design of the publication of Miss R’s narrative was not the true one, but that it was to serve merely as a scaffolding to the introduction, and that the latter is the real book designed to write down Catholicity, and to increase and extend the hatred and intolerance, already existing on the part of Protestant toward Catholic christians. If we are right, the design is a most unholy one, and in violation of the most extolled precepts of the Christian religion.

The introduction is marked in sufficiently strong lines, with the chicanery of the lawyer, the zeal of the sectarian, the intolerance of the bigot, and that disregard of truth and accuracy which so peculiarly belongs to the author of the narrative which follows it. The three first of these characteristics it will hardly be necessary to point out to the intelligent reader ; and to the prejudiced and determined believers in the book, it would be useless. When the names of the Publishing Committee shall be known, we shall no doubt find excellent specimens of each.

It was seen from the moment of the publication of the Report of

the Boston Investigating Committee, that Miss Reed and her reputation were objects of the greatest possible solicitude to the enemies of the Convent. It is difficult to conceive that there was any thing in her own character to make her a person of so much interest and consequence. Several editors of religious and secular papers came out in her favor, and spoke of her as a personal acquaintance, and the report seemed to be published in several papers, solely with a view to find fault with it for the manner in which she had been treated in it. She was called the "*hitherto respectable*," the interesting," the "amiable," the "intelligent young lady," "daughter of a native citizen," and that her character should be sacrificed, or even brought into suspicion, for the sake of defending the eight or ten foreign females in the Convent, was considered little less than treason. In a word, the report, though made after a long and careful inquiry, by a large number of the most intelligent gentlemen in the city, was attacked without mercy, as unfair in its premises and conclusions, and unworthy of confidence, so far as Miss Reed was implicated.

A letter published in the *Courier*, early in January, by Judge Fay, for another purpose, (imprudently, it seems, had he regarded his own peace) refers the editor to Miss Reed for information as to the causes which led to the destruction of the Convent, plainly intimating, like the Boston Committee Report, that her stories materially contributed to it. These were the only publications, as far as we know, that contained any thing like a reflection upon the character of Miss R. In addition to a prompt denial by Miss R. of the justice of the suggestions as regarded her, in a letter to the editor of the *Courier*, republished in the introduction to Miss R's book, and written no doubt by the same hand, many other articles appeared in the same and other papers, charging the hapless Judge with an ungenerous attack on an innocent and defenceless female. Those things which were too scurrilous or too false to appear in the Boston papers, were sent to New York, to come back to this community in a paper of the most reckless character, called the *Protestant Vindicator*. The Judge might well have exclaimed with poor Lear,

"The little dogs and all,  
Tray, Blanche, and Sweetheart, see, they bark at me."

In the same spirit, and with the same view, he is treated in the introduction in a manner, unfair and malignant to the last degree. Even the remarks of Buzzell's counsel, to the Jury, — counsel *paid* to defend a desperate cause, and allowed to assume any position consistent with law and evidence, are introduced as an evidence of an excitement of mind on the part of Judge F. in order to diminish the weight of his testimony. This might have been pardonable in

them, but in the writers of the introduction it is contemptible, and shows to what desperate shifts they are willing to resort, to protect the credit of their *protégée*.

Mrs. F. is also introduced, without the least reason, and connected with the most slanderous suggestions. See page 33—34. The writer says, "One of the few conversations she (Miss R.) held on the subject, was the one which Judge F. has *brought before the public, and misrepresented, with marked disregard to delicacy*, because the conversation he uses to establish his charge of conspiracy against the Convent, was held with his own wife, at her urgent solicitation." Now, by looking back to page 26, it will be perceived that the Judge's letter alludes to no conversation of Miss R. with any person in particular. On the contrary he speaks of Miss R. as a person "who had been about Boston and the vicinity, for the last two or three years, announcing herself as the humble instrument in the hands of Providence to destroy the institution at Mt. Benedict;" plainly intimating that it was a common language held to different persons, not in Cambridge particularly, but in Boston and the vicinity. Does not this show a consciousness of guilt on the part of Miss Reed? This is a fair specimen of the disregard of truth and accuracy, which marks almost every page of the introduction. Like master, like man; as the book is, so is its preface. Further, two short notes are inserted (it is wonderful they should have been preserved so long;) to prove "*urgent solicitation* and pressing earnestness for an interview," which they have the hardihood to say "the Judge has obliged the Committee to publish." They say that Mrs. F. solicited an interview and that Miss R. declined calling at Mrs. F.'s, but was willing to have Mrs. F. call on her, and yet the note of Mrs. F. which follows immediately after, proves that she was not very anxious in the matter, as she gave up the opportunity of seeing her for some other engagement. It also proves, that except on that day, Miss R. was willing to call on Mrs. F. as the letter in answer to Miss R.'s note fixes the hour for Miss R. to call. Then follows the unfounded and injurious suggestion that a conversation drawn from an *artless* young lady, (very artless, very young, and very much of a lady!) was treasured up nearly two years, to be made public in a distorted form, in order to charge upon her a conspiracy.

The next paragraph is also of an infamous character. We know, say they, that it has been thrown out by way of threat, that should her narrative be published, "her veracity would be destroyed by means of spies in the guise of friends, who had watched her ever since she had escaped from the Convent, and taken down her conversation in writing in order to detect her in some contradictions, &c. &c. This is a *Reedism* in perfection. Her conscience awakes

her suspicions. If she never held any or but very few conversations on this subject, as she says, who would have conceived such an idea? Her Committee say, she had always lived retired in the bosom of her family — never told her stories even to her own sisters, and but to two other persons, and yet her conversations are of so much consequence in her own eyes, and so extensively known or suspected, as to make it an object with somebody, to profess a counterfeit friendship for her, attend her at all times, and be prepared to write down her trash, and after all, unless she permitted her narrative to be published, her veracity was not to be attacked, and all this immense precaution would be lost. At the close of this specimen of her and their understanding, Mrs. F's name is connected with it in terms of apparent respect on the part of the writer, and yet in a manner calculated to excite the suspicion that she might have sought this conversation for such a sinister purpose.

The introduction speaks, in several places, about threats and denunciations against Miss R. and all who should aid in the publication of her book, and anticipates from her friends of the Ursulines the most formidable attacks upon the veracity. Was not "conscience father to that thought?" The suggestion that the publication was opposed by the Ursulines or their friends, is entirely a fiction. It was clearly for their interest that her stories should be exhibited in print, in a tangible form, so that they might be distinctly known, and refuted if false. It was vastly more injurious to have them circulated privately, so that the poison might gradually diffuse itself, without the possibility of remedy, than by publication to bring them directly to a trial of their truth. Had all Miss R's stories been printed within the first year of their birth, the Convent would probably have been standing at this day. She had not discernment enough to understand this, but doubtless her advisers had, and therefore resisted the publication, which her own wishes and her own vanity, would have long ago accomplished. the fact is, the narrative would not have been worth the publication, but for the destruction of the Convent, and the public excitement thereby created. It was the circulation of her stories in manuscript and in conversation, that was to destroy the Convent; and the destruction of the Convent was to secure a sale for her book! As a manuscript it aided in the work of iniquity; as a book it secured "the wages of iniquity."

In pages 41 — 42, the publishing elders undertake to show that the institution at Mt. Benedict, was an attempt to establish a Protestant school, on a plan of *secrecy*; that it was not accessible at "proper times, by the parents and friends of the inmates," and that the Boston Committee, in this respect, were mistaken: — that Protestant parents "were not permitted to enter any other room in that

spacious establishment, than the common parlor; and that even the physician, as they understand, (from Miss R. no doubt,) never saw any religeuse, to prescribe for them in their private apartments." It was reasonable to expect an attack upon the Ursulines as a secret society, when we have been told that the editor of the Advocate is one of the Publishing Committee. The rules of the Convent, the testimony of many individuals, and particularly of Dr. Thompson, physician to the Community, were a perfect justification of the Boston Report, and establish, beyond doubt, its correctness in this particular. Because Messrs. Fay and Thaxter had testified that they had never gone beyond the parlor, but in one instance, and had never sought to do so, they state as a necessary conclusion, that they were never permitted. They not only mistake the facts but make inferences not warranted even by the facts as assumed by themselves. Such is their accuracy in matters of fact and logic. The rules of the Community, and the statements of Dr. Thompson and others, prove, that there was no greater restraint upon visitors, than was consistent with the duties and occupations of the inmates and the decencies of a well-regulated family.<sup>1</sup>

The sage publishers, (page 28) ask, with a triumphant sneer at the Boston Committee and Judge F., as if the question were unanswerable, how a young girl, in the humble walks of life, could have been the instrument of getting up a mob to destroy the Ursuline Convent by violence! If they had any recollection of the history of mankind, they would see that nothing is more easy. Do they not remember the *popish plot*, in English history? That only about 150 years ago (1678) Titus Oates, a man of infamous character, and ordinary talents, by the mere force of impudent falsehood, and lying invention, threw all England into a state of such dreadful alarm, that for a long time, the whole population of London thanked God, as soon as they opened their eyes in the morning, that they had not been murdered or burnt up by the Catholics, during the night? Some of the best blood of England was shed by means of this wretch's perjuries, aided by a few others, acting perhaps as a Committee of Publication, and vouchers for his veracity. The Government were imposed upon, and Parliament gravely resolved, that the whole kingdom was in imminent danger from a hellish popish plot; and the House of Commons actually expelled a member for venturing to doubt its reality. Innocent men were capitally convicted, by juries, against the strongest circumstantial and positive evidence, and the death, imprisonment or exile, of many excellent, pious, and distinguished

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<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Thompson's affidavit, and letters of parents, in the Appendix.

persons, were the awful consequences of the lies of one worthless individual. The eyes of the public were not opened for two years to the truth of the case, nor until the wretch was convicted of perjury. Even then, such hold had error got on the popular mind, and so fortified by its own ingenuity in finding other circumstances to support it, that probably a greater part of the whole people of England died in the belief of the plot. It is now a matter of history, that this famous plot, which, for a time destroyed the happiness of millions, had no foundation whatever, but in the impudent invention of an abandoned individual. It is also worthy of remark, that this wretch was first of the Episcopal Church, afterwards a Catholic, and then was reconverted to his first faith.<sup>1</sup>

It would be useful to those readers, who do not recollect it, to read the account of this plot in Hume, Lingard, or some other historian. It is a valuable lesson on the subject of popular delusions, particularly where religion is concerned, and it may assist us in forming just opinions of passing events. Now why should not a young woman of great *apparent* sincerity and religious zeal, if she were utterly destitute of a regard to truth, or possessed a mind of such singular construction as to change the truth into "all monstrous shapes" of falsehood, be able to produce the effects which have been ascribed to her? Her stories are related, for the most part, to persons who are entirely unacquainted with the subjects of them; they come from a person who has had sufficient opportunities to know the truth. To the superficial reader, they may appear to have an air of truth. Mankind naturally speak the truth, and unless guarded by a want of confidence in the speaker — by our own superior knowledge, or by the incredibility of the tale, we naturally yield assent.

Now were the accounts of the Ursuline Community, as found in Miss R's book true, it is not surprising that it should become odious in popular opinion. If her friends tell the truth, her narrative is fully believed by the writer and his colleagues; and that in consequence thereof, the Convent is to them an object of hatred and disgust, and although they might not be the persons to put the torch to the building, they would be ready to thank God that in his Providence it was destroyed. A hundred cases of popular delusion might be cited to shew, that there is nothing at all improbable or incredible, in the supposition of her instrumentality in an event, which has involved so many individuals in distress and inflicted upon us

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<sup>1</sup> To make the parallel complete, it is only necessary for Miss R., finding how readily her present disclosures are believed, to come out occasionally with a new set, giving each series a deeper dye.

a national disgrace. Joanna Southcote, within a few years past, in enlightened England, although "old, illiterate and vulgar," succeeded in imposing upon a vast number of people, and some of them well educated, the most ridiculous notions as gospel truth.<sup>1</sup>

The publishers might at least have remembered Matthias, the New York Prophet, a tale of the last week's newspaper. Nobody ought to know better than the publishers, who are said to be many of them Editors of newspapers, that lies are often even more plausible than truth, for this simple reason, that lies may be adapted to the prejudices and cravings of the popular mind, whereas truth is unbending and is very apt to be unpalatable. They were, therefore, the very persons to understand the value of Miss R's book, and the very last that should stand gentlemen ushers to its introduction into the world.

The writers of the introduction assume as true, whatever Miss R. states to them, relative to her design in going to the Convent and leaving it, and as to what took place while she was there and since she left it. On these assumptions they argue, and if untrue, as we trust to prove them, the conclusions are necessarily fallacious. It is the work of a lawyer, who makes his evidence to suit his argument, and takes care to overlook every thing on the other side. They are evidently actuated by strong sympathy for the incendiaries; and although in terms they deprecate the destruction of the Convent by a mob, they mean to satisfy the individuals who composed it, that they have done a work not "meet for repentance." The writers strive only to justify the end, well knowing that the end with the mob would justify the means.

To go over the matters of fact contained in the introduction, with the arguments founded on them, and point out their inaccuracies further than we have done, would be tedious; and as we shall present a very different view of the case, both as to fact and conclusions, — if we succeed, the fallacies of the introduction will be sufficiently exposed without further comment. The chief design of it is declared to be, the vindication of Miss R. from the aspersions cast on her, by the Report of the Boston Committee and others, who have affirmed or intimated, that her falsehoods were instrumental in the destruction of the Convent. If it be proved to a reasonable degree of certainty, that the stories originating with her were unfounded, and at the same time calculated to make the people in the vicinity believe that the Convent was a wicked and corrupt place, and that without this belief, founded upon these stories, there was no other adequate cause for the popular rage which destroyed it, we think that no one will pretend that she has been treated with unnecessary severity.

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<sup>1</sup> Espriella's Letters — by Southey.



We have, then, two principal subjects of inquiry that present themselves for consideration : *first*, in relation to Miss Reed's conduct after leaving the Convent ; and *second*, as to the falsehood or truth of the stories then reported by her, and now in a modified form sanctioned by an avowed publication.

On the 18th day of January, (not February,) 1832, after dinner, Miss Reed left the Convent, without the knowledge of the Superior, or any of the Community, and went to Mr. K's who keeps the toll-house on the Medford turnpike, and within a few rods of the Convent grounds, on the eastern side, where there is only a common rail fence to be passed to reach the road. This departure is carefully represented as an *escape* in all her accounts written or unwritten, and in the advertisements of her book. An escape implies self-liberation from restraint, or danger, as from a prison or from some impending evil ; her first attack upon the Convent therefore is that which is implied in her manner of leaving it, and the term used to describe it. Her going to Mr. K's in the manner she herself describes, must naturally have excited in his family the worst surmises. Such, we are credibly informed, was the fact, and his location and employment were well calculated to diffuse in Charlestown and Medford, where Miss Reed's father had lived and where she was known, any scandal against the Ursulines to which the pretended escape had given rise. She must have been there several hours. Her extraordinary conduct, her dark insinuations against the Convent, as the reason of her quitting it, were so disgusting to Mrs. G. who came over to Mr. K's in the evening, with her brother, in consequence of the message sent by Miss R., that she actually left her at K's, and set out on her return home ; but in consequence of her brother's suggestion she went back and took her home with her. She remained with Mrs. G. about five weeks, during which time, she told a great many of the stories contained in her book, but upon a certain occasion disavowed them all. Mrs. G. who had been strongly interested for her before she went into the Convent, and had made very great exertions to serve her, according to her means, became satisfied of her falsehood and duplicity and got rid of her as best she could. She then went to Mrs. Paine's for a short time, and from there to pay a farewell visit to her relations, previous to her removal as she said, to some nunnery at the South ; all this time she continued a Catholic and prosecuted her purpose of becoming a sister of Charity with Mary Francis, (Miss Kennedy.) During her residence with Mrs. G. and down to the 11th of August, 1834, wherever she was, she constantly expressed her fears of the Catholics, lest they should catch her and kill her. While at her brother's at East Cambridge, it was reported among the neighbours, that she

was afraid to sleep in a room alone, on this account. When with the Catholics however, she pretended to be afraid of her own relations, and when she had returned to them, pretended to be in fear of the Catholics.

When at East Cambridge about two months after leaving the Convent, she sent a note to Miss D. of Cambridge, pressing her to get away from the Convent, a Miss Shea,<sup>1</sup> a lay sister and domestic in that establishment, who had formerly been a faithful and valued domestic in Miss D's family. Miss R. represented to Miss D. that this woman was very unhappy there, and wanted to get away, but could not; and that the interference of Miss D. was necessary to her rescue. Miss D. as a member of a charitable society for the relief of sick poor, had been at the house of Miss R's father during her mother's last illness, and had seen her there and at meeting in Cambridge. From some prejudice or other cause, Miss D. paid no regard to the note, a second came very pressing to the same purpose, and equally disregarded. Then a message was sent, requesting Miss D. to call down to her brother's at East Cambridge to see her on the subject, as Miss R. was afraid to go to Miss D's, for fear of the Catholics. Miss D. did not happen to believe these stories, but replied that if Miss R. wished to see her, she must come to her. Finding all other plans had failed, Miss R. went to Miss D. at Cambridge, notwithstanding her fear of the Catholics, and told her stories; Miss D. was still incredulous as to Miss Shea's being restrained against her will, and declined taking any step in the matter. The female who had been the object of Miss R's solicitude, shortly after left the Convent, came to Miss D's, and entirely contradicted the representations, made about herself by Miss R. By this proceeding, we venture to say that any impartial reader will agree, that Miss R. in one instance has been an active instrument in slandering the Convent.

Her conversations about the Convent were full of insinuations, that she could tell more than she did. Dr. Thompson tells an amusing instance of that kind, in speaking of Mrs. Mary Magdalene, who died, during the "six months."<sup>2</sup> "Oh! Doctor," said she "no tongue can tell, what that poor creature suffered;" but on being pressed to be more particular, she did not dare to trust herself beyond that significant exclamation!

It was very evident from the examination of the Convent by Mr. Cutter, and subsequently by the Selectmen of Charlestown, that their minds were strongly impressed with the idea of foul practices there. They could take the words of the Superior and other ladies

<sup>1</sup> See Miss R's book, page 173.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix. Dr. T's affidavit.

for nothing ; they must see Mrs. Mary John ; and when the Selectmen had seen and questioned her alone, and were satisfied as it respected her, they still thought it necessary to go over every part of the premises to look for something more. They even examined the tomb. It was understood that they were looking for a person, supposed to be murdered. It could not be Mrs. Mary John, who was with them alive. Was it not "Mary Francis?" Will Miss R. say that she had not before this suggested to any person, that she, "Miss Mary F." was put out of the way, for having influenced her to leave the Convent. Again, it was believed by many people, — notwithstanding Mr. Cutter who knew Mary John perfectly well, had seen her alone and also in company with the Selectmen, and had so stated publicly and privately, — that he had not seen her. He says that he was told by several persons, that they did not believe he had seen her, although he might think he had, but that he had been imposed upon by a fictitious personage, and that the real Mary John was mysteriously disposed of, so strong was the delusion ! Whence came the idea ? We answer, from Miss R. For a confirmation of this, we refer to a fact well known to the editor of the Advocate. Several weeks after Messrs. Cutter and the Selectmen certified that they had seen Mrs. Mary John happy and contented in the Convent, and after a hundred persons had seen and conversed with her, Miss R. affected to remain incredulous, and insisted that she had not been seen. She so far influenced the minds of others, that a *committee of investigation* was appointed, and evidence was received by them upon the subject, and Mr. Hallet, editor of the Advocate, was a member of that Committee ; it was finally arranged by the Committee, in order to make certain of the correctness of their suspicions, that Miss Reed's sister, Mrs. Pond, accompanied by Capt. Davis, Dr. Appleton, and Mr. Hallet, taking with them Miss Penniman, a former pupil of the Convent, *concealing* the object of the visit to identify Mrs. Mary John, should go to the residence of the Ursulines in Boston, and see the lady with their own eyes. When they reported the result, and Miss Reed heard their description of the person, she said, with a deep-drawn sigh, as if her mind was greatly relieved — "Thank God 'tis she" ! Such was the farce she played off on her friends on that occasion ; and Mr. Hallet, in his next paper, announced the fact, (as if it had hitherto been a matter of question in the Community) that the real Mary John was alive. This fact proves, as we think, the peculiar character of her mind — her power of imposing upon others, or on herself, or both, in the face of the most satisfactory evidence. With this fact before him, what man can doubt as to the sort of language she must have held previous to the 11th of

August? It will be recollected that she was at that time in Charlestown, at the Baptist seminary — near the very spot where the news-collector for the *Mercantile Journal*, picked up his paragraph about the mysterious lady, and where the inflammatory placards for the destruction of the Convent, were first posted. The simple affair of Mrs. Mary John leaving the Convent as she did, had nothing in it to have excited a remark, without some person or persons had artfully misrepresented it, or given it an extraordinary aspect, or prepared the public mind, by other stories, to put the worst construction upon it. She was evidently deranged. She uttered no complaint against her sisters, but spoke of them in the kindest terms. She went to the house of one of the most respected families in West Cambridge, where she was visited by her brother and the Bishop. This lady then, had the protection of the Bishop, of her own brother, and of the family to which she was carried. Is it possible to imagine a case, where there was less ground to find fault with the Ursulines, or to suspect them of any improper designs, or that Mrs. Mary John's life or liberty were menaced? To Miss Reed's mind, it was a different affair. She could see nothing but dungeons or death, for poor Mrs. Mary John; and it took many weeks and most extraordinary measures to remove her delusion. The visits of Mr. Cutter, the Selectmen and Miss Reed's friends, were the result of suspicions and suggestions of the most injurious nature; and we know and have never heard, of but one person in the neighborhood, who could, from her supposed knowledge, have given authority to them: that person was Miss Reed. Mrs. Mary John's supposed concealment or death was thus added to the old stories of her own restraint in the Convent, — with the conspiracy for her abduction and exile in Canada, and the dark suggestions about Mary Francis's disappearance, to produce the conflagration at Mount Benedict. She was openly quoted as authority on the very night of that sad event.

There were, no doubt, at all times with a portion of the community, some vague prejudices against nunneries; prejudices, which were supposed to be the mere remnants of Protestant superstition, in this country of toleration. Sectarian preaching and writing had contributed something more than its mite, in extending and exciting them into more active operation; but the Convent would have passed unscathed through all these trials, if the stories of foul and wicked practices therein, particularly those affecting the lives and liberties of its inmates, had not been circulated and believed. It was this most foul and slanderous attack on the moral conduct of the members, which brought about its destruction. These stories were circulated by Rebecca T. Reed, by word and by writing, from the day she left the Convent to the publication of her book. She may

deny and prevaricate, and her publishers may echo it; but it is, and has been for a long time, matter of general notoriety. The week after the Convent was burned, half the persons who spoke of the act as an horrible outrage, at the same time intimated the belief, that the Convent was a very wicked place. Upon asking the reasons of such belief, the answer invariably was, — ‘Why, a young woman, who resided there, and ran away, tells very bad stories,’ &c. Many, probably thousands, who had merely heard her name, had heard and believed the slanders which were attached to it.<sup>1</sup> We venture to say, that the Boston Committee, in all their investigations and inquiries, never heard any other authority than this young woman for all the false charges current against the Community. The Ursulines had been in Boston many years before removing to Mount Benedict; and while there or in Charlestown, who ever heard any thing against their moral character until 1832. The opinion, therefore, of the Boston Committee was well founded, or was in fact but the opinion of a large portion of the public. Nay, the warmest friends of Miss Reed, and the greatest enemies of Catholicity, hold the same opinion, and consider her instrumentality in that unholy work as her chief, if not only merit; and she herself would undoubtedly have felt complimented by that suggestion in Judge F’s letter, if it had not been coupled with a suggestion against the truth of her expected publication.

We then arrive at the main question: Are her stories true? And we aver, that all the stories told by her, injurious to the moral character and conduct of the Ursulines, are wholly without foundation in fact. If this prove so, she is one of the greatest impostors of her day and generation.

Now these stories depend for their truth — 1st, — upon her own personal veracity, or credibility, and that may be impeached in several ways, and one method of testing the truth of her statements, is to inquire into her general character and conduct.

She is the daughter of a farmer, who has lived chiefly in Milk Row, in Charlestown, and who from the time of her birth, has been as poor a man as could be found in the vicinity. We do not mention his poverty as a disgrace, but as a fact, having a necessary bearing on the credit of some of her representations. She proves by her narrative, that she was a disobedient child; and utterly disregardless of both the feelings, wishes and commands of her parents. (See pages 51-2 and 62, &c.) She will doubtless, at-

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<sup>1</sup> Proofs, in a durable form upon this point, will be collected shortly, and presented to the public.

tempt to throw the blame on the Catholics, but her determination was made, as appears by her book, in her own mind, before she saw a Catholic.

Her book throughout shows her to be artful, suspicious and a double dealer. With her nothing is simple and direct. She could not get the name of Mary Francis, which was Kennedy, in all their communications, written and verbal, except by pricking it out in the letters of a book, which two months after, Miss R. was obliged to steal and carry away, according to her own account, (p. 173,) in order to possess the name and address of Miss Kennedy. She also took a hood, which she says, she "secreted with the book" and which Mrs. G. (not by her direction) carried back some time after. Taking only this account of herself, one would not draw very favorable conclusions, as to her integrity or character. But these are trifles with her.

Feeling it necessary to fortify her reputation for truth, her Committee have published three certificates in the introduction. The first by the Rev. Mr. Croswell, which although it may be literally true, we were rather surprised to see, because we think it is calculated to mislead the unwary, and misrepresent the true state of his mind. If a Catholic Priest had written such an one, it would most likely have been called Jesuitical. The material part is, "I repose great confidence in her sincerity and intention to relate what *she believes to be the truth.*" He does not say that he has confidence that *what she relates is the truth*; nor, we venture to say, does he believe that the tales in her book are all true; and, unless we are much misinformed, Mr. C. will not pledge his credit for their truth. We shall certainly leave him and the phrenological philosophers to reconcile the idea of sincerity, with the relation of known falsehood as truth. Mr. Adams's certificate requires no remark. It proves only that she had not behaved ill, to his knowledge. But these two certificates go to prove one thing against Miss R. — that the writers were not willing to sign the general certificate in page 41, which goes fully and clearly to her character for truth. That certificate was dated September 26th, and the other two in October after. It was then prepared, but these two gentlemen chose to make their certificates in their own way. We have nothing to remark as to the signers of the general certificate. They are unknown to us, and may all be credible people; but it is well known how easy it is to obtain certificates of this kind, and it is rather more surprising that she has so few, than that there are not more. The signers probably, had only a temporary and limited acquaintance with her, and very honestly believe all they have certified: but it is singular that she has only one name at Cragie's Point, where she has resided a considerable time since the

year 1831. Why has she not produced the certificates of her friends in Milk Row and Charlestown; Miss H. Mrs. G. Mrs. P. her sponsor, Mrs. K. and Mrs. S. with the last of whom she lived as a domestic? The truth is, her general character, to say the least of it, is very equivocal, and we venture farther to refer for it, to her publishers, Russell & Metcalf. She was a domestic in Mr. Russell's family not long before she became a Catholic, and he and Mrs. R. must know something about her. It is said she left them much as she did the Convent, and came near involving Mr. R. in a personal conflict, by her extraordinary sayings and doings on the occasion. Col. Metcalf also, who lives in Cambridge, knows much of her character by hearsay. We believe neither of these gentlemen would, for the profits they will make on her book, vouch for the truth of its contents, or say that they believe the statements of Miss Reed contained therein.

But it is not necessary to pursue this topic farther. Her conduct since she left her own family, has been of so unusual a cast, as to indicate a very peculiar genius. After living upon some neighbors for a short time, she threw herself upon the charity of a perfect stranger, Mrs. Graham, a very respectable Scotch woman, who kept house for her brother and a Mr. Barr, both Scotchmen, who have, for several years past, resided near the bleachery in Milk Row. She represented herself as abandoned by her father and family, on account of her desire to become a Catholic, which she was resolved to do, in obedience to the dying request of her mother. She said she had been to the Bishop, who had sent, or advised, her to apply to them to get instructed in the Catholic faith, &c. &c. Mrs. G. and her friends were rather surprised at this, as they were not Catholics, and did not even know the Bishop, but it being possible that there might be some mistake, the mistrust that her story excited, passed away. Mrs. G. however, at first wholly declined acceding to her request, as a thing incompatible with her convenience and condition in life. They lived by their daily labor, as bleachers, and the request seemed equally unreasonable and extraordinary. She told Miss R. that they were not Catholics and could give her no aid in learning their doctrines. They were all three, Scotch Presbyterians at that time, and not Episcopalians. She, however, persevered and renewed her applications at short intervals, till, by her great apparent destitution and distress, by the most moving appeals to her feelings as a woman and a Christian, she succeeded in establishing herself in Mrs. G's. family. The latter became extremely interested in her, from her religious enthusiasm, and desolate condition, and after a few weeks, to promote her wishes and views to become a Catholic, procured a friend, Mrs. Hoyne, an Irish woman

near the Catholic Church in Charlestown, to take her into her family, that she might more conveniently receive the instructions of the Rev. Mr. Byrne. Between these two women, and another Irish family, (Mr. Paine's,) she continued to be aided and supported until she went into the Convent, and was, after leaving it, received by them again and maintained for several weeks. Deserted as she was, or pretended to be, by her family, and full of religious zeal and piety, she interested the feelings of all of them to that degree as to support her for six or eight months free of compensation. These people, who are of perfectly good character, can tell what return she has made them, and whether they now believe themselves imposed on by her or not!

Her history presents another curious trait of her extraordinary character. She has been twice baptised, as appears by her own book; first in the Episcopal and then in the Catholic Church. In neither case, we understand, was any relative present to assist at the ceremony. Her male sponsors at the first, were an Englishman and a Scotchman, and at the last, an Irishman. We mean no disrespect to those persons, who acted from benevolent and Christian motives, but to show what must have been the extraordinary state of the relation between her and her own family. Her first baptism probably took place at the age of 14 or 15, at the Episcopal Church in Cambridge, to which she and her parents did *not* belong. But her second baptism in the Catholic Church, as she states, took place because her first was declared by *the Catholics* invalid. Now it is well understood by the divines of the respective Churches, that Catholics hold no such doctrine, and we affirm that the Rev. Mr. Byrne, never asserted such an idea. We are credibly informed by a witness, who attended as her friend, that Miss R. in her Catholic zeal, affected to doubt the validity of her first baptism, and requested Mr. B. to do the work again. His statement, which will be found in the Appendix, will be presented to the public, among other documents, in a more extended form.

One of her sponsors in her first baptism, is still living, and can probably tell whether water was used at that time or not. We believe that Rev. Mr. B. was imposed upon, and that the statement of Miss R. that water was not used at her first baptism, is untrue; and that upon no other ground than that untruth, was it declared invalid by Mr. B. It is easy to see from this and similar dealings, that the Catholics were deluded by her, and not she by the Catholics, as her book intimates.

Let us next see how Miss R. stands affected by the denials and contradictions of those to whom her stories relate, or of others. Many of these facts stated by her, could be known only to the inmates



of the Convent at the time, or to the Bishop who is implicated, or to some of them. And who are they? The Bishop is a well educated gentleman, of unimpeached reputation, as far as we have ever heard a suggestion. The members of the Ursuline Community are religious persons, of mature age and unsullied characters, (except so far as Miss R. has slandered them); they are well educated, intelligent ladies, secluded from the world by their religious vows, having nothing to ask of it, but its good opinion, — rendering it their services, by the instruction of young females, pursuant to what they believe to be a religious duty — and living under a constitution and rules, which as far as possible tend to make them virtuous and exemplary. There are several of them. If they do not speak the truth, their turpitude is known to each other; and each must be abased not only in her own eyes, but in the eyes of the others. Here is a security for truth which Miss Reed has not. Few persons, even of those who might be ready to deny the truth, or utter a falsehood, if known only to their own hearts, would be so depraved as to consent to a partnership in guilt. On the other hand, how stands Miss R? A young woman brought up in a very loose manner, who has shewn none of the virtues of filial obedience, love of honest employment; or indeed, any good propensity, unless religious fanaticism be such; — one who had abandoned her friends, or been abandoned by them at the age of 17 or 18, and whose general character is of a very “questionable shape.” This person claims to have her word outweigh the word of the several persons above described. It is only to present the question in this simple form, to any sensible mind, to settle such a preposterous claim forever.

Those who patronized the school, were interested to satisfy themselves of its character, and that of its teachers; and although they might not know every thing respecting the discipline of the religious part of the establishment, they would, from what they did know, be able to determine with great certainty the truth or impossibility of many of these strange tales. And we venture to say, that none of the parents or pupils, who may read Miss R’s. book, will give it the slightest credit. Their confidence has never been affected in the least degree; and the same children who were in the school at the destruction of the Convent, returned to it on its re-establishment, as far as their accommodations would permit. These facts speak volumes, and will satisfy any rational mind, that Miss R. is unworthy of credit.

Then is her testimony corroborated by others? As far as we have known or believe, by no individual or circumstance! She speaks of a great many events, transactions and conversations in and out of the Convent, which took place in the presence of others,

and in which they were more or less concerned. Many of these events, &c., had no relation to the Convent, and were extremely unimportant; and yet, incredible as it may seem, we affirm that almost without exception, they will be discredited by the persons referred to, and in all material respects, will be pronounced sheer fabrications, or misrepresentations, or mistakes. We are assured by a gentleman, in whom we have entire confidence, and who has taken some pains to examine into this matter, that such is the fact with respect to Mrs. G., Mrs. H., and Mrs. P., whom she calls her friends, and with whom she resided immediately before she entered the Convent, and after she left it. Also with respect to Rev. Mr. Byrne, Miss M. H. the domestic of H. J. K., and to what took place in the school, as mentioned in the first and second pages of her narrative. We will double the profits of her book to her, if she will prove by the school mistress and children, the circumstances she there states. The time when the Nuns took possession of Mt. Benedict is well known, and it is easily ascertained who kept the school at that time, and we defy herself, and her four and twenty elders, (for it may be presumed she had as many as Joanna Southcote,) to establish the truth of her two first pages. The Ursulines state, that they went from Boston to the new habitation, at 5 o'clock in the morning, to avoid public notice. This must have been before school hours.

Will Sarah Shea, or Mary Francis confirm the various statements connected with them? According to her account, they could not entertain any friendship towards the Superior, and must be very ready to testify for Miss R. Will Mr. R. who introduced her to the Bishop, confirm her story of the catechism, (page 59,) or the very extraordinary account, (page 57) of his visit to her, to give her some scripture proofs of the infallibility of the Romish Church, requesting when she had done, that she would *secrete the paper* on which the texts were written? Why secrete a paper on which texts of scripture were written, and which, if found by a Christian of any denomination, could have excited neither surprise nor suspicion? Surely he or she must have the organ of secretiveness wonderfully developed! Then there is the O'Flaherty miracle! Will Mrs G. and the person restored to sight, confirm that portion of her book? (See page 58.) Did any of Mr. Kidder's family see the Convent men searching the Canal with long poles, (the 18th of January, be it remembered,) and tracking her with dogs? Will Mrs. G. confirm the statement about the wounds and the frozen feet? How came those feet frozen, and whence those wounds? We venture to affirm, that in not one circumstance in six, mentioned by her in the narrative will she be confirmed by those who were witnesses. On the other hand, we are credibly informed that what took place in the knowl-

edge of her friends, Mrs. G. and others, her veracity is directly denied, as to the most material allegations. This at least must produce a doubt on the minds of the most prejudiced men, and put the young woman and her endorsers to further proof.

But there is discrediting proof from another source, that we think will be most satisfactory and conclusive to any fair mind, even against preconceived opinions. That is the testimony of Miss Caroline Alden, of Belfast, inserted in the Appendix. She is, as we understand, a well educated lady, who has now, or has had, charge of a female seminary in that town. Her character is well known there and to many persons in this vicinity, and it is of the first class. A letter written by her to Judge Fay, in answer to his inquiries into the character of the *Ursuline Community*, (not Miss R's.) was published in the *Daily Advertiser* soon after the Convent was destroyed, and may be found in the Appendix, with a second letter, on the same subject, from her, with one from her brother, Dr. Alden, postmaster of B. This lady was a member of the *Ursuline Community* four years. She went with a view, probably, to continue for life, but after having taken the white veil, (according to Miss R. "white vows,") and remained two years, she concluded to return to her family. She nevertheless continued in the Convent two years longer, from attachment to the Superior and the sisterhood. What a different person she must have been from Miss Reed?

These letters prove conclusively, that the suggestions of restraint upon personal liberty in the Convent ; the charges of ill treatment of the sick ; kissing the Bishop's footsteps ; kneeling, walking on the knees, &c. &c. are the mere creations of the brain. The evidence which this letter furnishes, proves, also, that the members of the Community were always at liberty to leave the Convent when they pleased. The Constitution of the Society also provides in the clearest manner for the freedom of all its inmates, and we defy any person to produce any evidence, except that of Miss R., that any one ever suffered the slightest possible control over their personal liberty ! It is presumed that even her Committee will admit, that Miss Alden's testimony is directly in contradiction of Miss R. in many material particulars, relative to the manners, discipline and character of the Ursulines, and if true, entirely destroys her credit, not only in those particulars, but in all others. It is a well established rule of law and common sense, that if a witness be convicted of a wilful falsehood in one fact, he is not worthy of belief in any other ; at any rate that his declaration is not to be received against that of a person who stands unimpeached. And we call on every honest mind, to throw down her book as a cabinet of falsehoods, if she be proved guilty of a single wilfully false statement. She has grossly accused

persons of fair and unblemished fame, and if her own character stood ever so high, one detected false charge, must leaven the whole lump. How then does her personal character compare with Miss A's for unquestioned veracity, for age, education, intelligence? It will be observed that Miss A's statement is verified by acts, which speak louder than words. Her voluntary stay of four years in all, and two after she had abandoned the idea of taking the black veil, through mere attachment to the Superior and Nuns; her high recommendation of the Convent as a school, to her friends at all times; the language in which she had constantly spoken of its members to her brother and other Protestant friends, can leave no doubt that her opinions and belief are not made up for the occasion. Her situation is such as to place her testimony above suspicion. She is entirely disconnected and independent of the Convent and can have no motive but truth and justice in what she states. Can there be the least question as to the comparative value of her evidence and that of Miss Reed? We think not.

Miss Alden's Convent name was Mary Angela, and is alluded to in Miss R's book, page 111, where she either tells a lie of Mary Francis, or makes Mrs. M. F. tell a lie of Miss Alden, as to the escape of the latter. The latter was in the Convent at the same time with Mary Francis, but knew nothing of her being unhappy there. We desire to observe, once for all, that we believe M. F. to be grievously slandered in Miss R's book; and that all that she makes that lady say against the Superior and the rest of the Community, the suggestions about forgeries and suppressions of letters, her intrigues with Miss R., and indeed, every thing inconsistent with a good understanding and harmony between her and the rest of the Community, is the invention of Miss Reed.<sup>1</sup> We have seen a letter of condolence from that lady to the Superior, and one to another sister, since the Convent was burnt, in which she uses most friendly and respectful language, and such only as could be expected in a letter between persons entertaining a mutual regard. Her present Convent name is Mary Paulina, her real name is Ann Janet Kennedy.

We now come to consider the extreme improbability and absurdity of these tales. These traits are so numerous to our apprehension, that it would be both laborious and unnecessary to do more than select a few.

She says (page 165) that "she was in the habit of talking in her sleep, and had often awoke and found the Religieuse kneeling

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<sup>1</sup> Her testimony in full, will be laid before the public as soon as practicable.

around her couch and was told they were praying for her. Fearing lest she should let fall words which might betray her, she tied a handkerchief round her face to avoid detection." Simple, artless creature! Does not this show that she was determined that the inmates of the Convent should never hear the truth from her even in her sleep? Did her Committee swallow all this without any wry faces? What advantage were the sisters to derive from hearing a *simple and artless girl* talk in her sleep, that could indemnify them for their broken rest, and this "*often*;" or what the purpose of their prayers on the occasion? Another story of this class, is that (page 127) about the request of the Bishop to a dying Nun, that she would "implore the Almighty to send down from Heaven a bushel of gold for building a college on Bunker's Hill, &c. He said he had bought the land, &c., and that the sisters who had died had promised to present his request, but had not fulfilled their obligations:" and, says he, "you must shake hands in heaven with all the sisters who have gone, and ask them why they have not fulfilled their promise, for I have waited long enough." To an enlightened mind, we should be willing to put the whole case of her credibility on this single story. That a well educated, intelligent dignitary of the Church could be guilty of such impious folly, would not be believed by any rational man, upon the testimony of any ordinary witness, even if it were uncontradicted by the Bishop himself, and all other persons present on the melancholy occasion. We do not hesitate to pronounce it a wilful slander! It is not only a pure invention, but a weak and silly one! There is not a clergyman of any church in this vicinity, who would not feel humiliation and shame at being obliged to deny the truth of so absurd and ridiculous a charge. Is there an Editor among her Committee who can screw his credulity up to the sticking place for that tastefully conceived tale?

Then comes the brutal treatment of Mrs. Mary Magdalene, in which the Superior, Bishop and other sisters are exhibited as guilty of a cruelty and want of feeling towards a sick and dying female amounting to brutality, (pages 91, 104, 125-6-7-8-9 and 132.) No person, man or woman, who has lived among decent people, we should presume, could be made to believe these circumstances, if they had been charged upon the very dregs of society! Females of all classes naturally kind, are particularly so in case of sickness; and this case supposes that in a community of eight or ten females well educated and of accomplished manners, under all the influences of religious duty and regard to their character, separated from the world by voluntary seclusion, and associated upon principles of mutual dependence and common lot, a sick sister could be treated

with cruelty ! Does the religion of the cross so brutify the gentle nature of woman ? And can the mind of any member of the Committee be so stupified by its influence, as to stand sponsor for such an infamous libel ? Heaven forbid ! — This is not all. That dying Nun had two own sisters in the Convent at the same time, who were novices. Would they have continued there, and taken the black veil afterwards, if there had been a particle of truth in that portion of the “*narrative* ?” Add to all this the testimony of Miss Alden and Dr. Thompson and the solemn declaration of these own sisters of Mary Magdalene, made in writing and exhibited to the Boston Investigating Committee in order to contradict the lying report !!

The only other story of the incredible class, which we shall notice, is that which she says induced her to escape from the Convent, — the conspiracy between the Bishop and the Superior to send her to Canada against her will. How the Editor of the Advocate must have felt when he read of this narrowly escaped abduction ! Miss R. overhears a conversation between the Bishop and Superior. To do this she does not hesitate to exhibit herself as a secret listener, who had neglected a duty and resorted to a lie and an artifice to prevent detection. The story is varied in her book, from what it was in her original manuscript, if some of her friends give a correct account of it ; but only in the trifling circumstance that instead of hearing through an open door, she put her ear to the keyhole. Probably the publishers did not like the appearance of the latter and she substituted the open door. The emendation is decidedly bad, as less probable ; for the door is opened, as the story stands, for no apparent reason, but for her convenience in hearing a wicked conspiracy against herself. The Bishop and Superior were in an adjoining room, contriving a plot of the most atrocious kind, for the accomplishment of which it was important to exercise the greatest caution and secrecy, both to effect its execution and to secure themselves against detection. The doors were shut, but they did just what they ought not to have done, they opened the door into the room where the listener was, not because they had occasion to go into it, but just to accommodate the story and betray themselves. And what was the great reason for the proposed abduction, that if effected and discovered, must have ruined the Bishop and the Ursuline Community, in character and estate ? Simply because “ it would not do, to have such reports go abroad as these persons (viz : Miss R. and Mary Francis) would carry !” Mary Francis had already gone, and Miss R’s abduction would only half prevent the mischief. One woman was already abroad, and one woman is as good as a hundred, as Miss R. has abundantly proved by her own conduct, to set stories in motion. But what reports were to be carried What were

to be feared? Had Mary Francis or Miss R. given any reason to suppose they had a design, or wish to injure the Convent. No evidence as far as we can perceive, existed at that time, to excite any such expectation, and it was very extraordinary that one of the most desperate and wicked designs that ever existed, should have been entertained without the slightest apparent reason!

Even if there had been a declared purpose, on the part of Miss R. and M. Francis to carry about any reports whatever injurious to the Community, it would have shewn the last degree of folly to expose it to almost certain ruin in order to avoid an uncertain and inferior danger. From these considerations, such a project would be clearly improbable and absurd; but when the difficulty, if not impossibility, of carrying such a project into effect is considered, it becomes ridiculous. She says, "the Bishop said it would take two or three days for a carriage to cross the line." Now the stage takes four days, as the Bishop must have known, if he had known anything upon the subject; and she clearly could not be sent by the stage. She would certainly cry out, at some of the stopping places. No—a close carriage would be necessary; the driver must be in the secret; she must be gagged, and not suffered to be seen, or to leave the coach during the whole way. Who was to take charge of her? If not the Bishop, some other strong man must be let into the secret, &c. &c. These are only a part of the difficulties. Some place must be prepared in Canada for her reception and detention, and certain people there must enter into the wicked views of the Bishop, to accomplish the object;—then the danger of escaping and coming back upon them, with all the awful consequences to their persons and property. Now, are the publishing friends entitled to belief, when they say they give full faith and credit to such stories as these? If Miss R. is sincere in the belief of this story, she is a fool, or a mad creature; if she is not, she is an impostor! Every part of the tale affords additional evidence of the same position. Although the Bishop had given the Superior instructions how to entice her into the carriage, yet the whole project failed, after all the mighty preparations, and after the carriage was at the door, *by her simply saying, she would not go to see her friends at that time.* Indeed, the whole account (pp. 166, 167) affords an amusing specimen of her talent at story-telling, and of her address in eluding danger! This story, attentively considered, exhibits, we suspect, the true index to her character: that she is of a nervous or hysterical constitution, and imagines a thousand things, which she mistakes for realities. It seems to us almost an insult to the understanding of readers to offer further evidence against the credibility of Miss R. and every thing her book contains. But as there are some people whose prejudices so far deprive them of

reason as not to perceive that one, or two, or even half a dozen lies ought to condemn all the rest, we shall proceed a little further; for even while we are writing, proofs accumulate to our hand.

She told the Lady Superior, (p. 55) that she did not consider her "education *complete*," leaving the reader to infer, from what was said, that she had a common school education, at least — or as much as girls of her age generally possessed, — how is the fact?

It will be seen on page 94 of her book, that she speaks of a piece of *poetry*, composed by her at Mount Benedict, and presented to the Superior, who says, in page 23 of her Answer, that they were written for her by Mrs. Mary Austin, and that Miss Reed could not pen two lines of prose or poetry correctly. As proof of this, — after Miss Reed left the Convent, and while at Mrs. Graham's she told her that she composed a piece of poetry, as mentioned in her book, and sat down and wrote it out from memory, and presented it to Mrs. Graham. The original is in the possession of Dr. Byrne, and will be duly authenticated. If the lines are original, they show her want of common sense as well as education; if they purport to be a copy of the accomplished Mrs. Mary Austin's verses, they prove her inaccuracy as well as her ignorance of the most common acquirements in New-England—spelling and grammar. We present them, word for word, as copied from the original in her hand-writing.

*To Our reverent Mother.*

My dear ma mare you shall allways find,  
In me a child affectionate and kind.  
So with cheerful heart, I come to say,  
That I wish you a very happy day.

And so I do to all the rest,  
I must not love one sister best.  
They are all as one to me,  
And I wish I could with them allways be.

Therefore I have one request to make,  
fearing lest any rash step I take.  
that I may In your prayers shaire  
The holey habbit for to wear.

Let us now look at the inconsistencies contained in the book.

She took the vows of a novice, as she pretends, after she must have been three months in the Convent, and after she became dissatisfied with the Superior and every thing there, and had actually engaged with Mary Francis to get away. Now had this been true, (as it was not) what gross inconsistency and hypocrisy, and how entirely she disregarded her obligation! One would think that such open and *artless* accounts of her own inconsistency and baseness, would shake the confidence of her friends either in the soundness of her intellect or that of her heart.



But there is one fact of startling import, the proof of which is to be found in her book, and in the letters which she has in her possession from Miss Kennedy, as well as from the statements of her friends Mrs. G. Mrs. P. and Mr. Byrne ; and that is, that for several weeks after leaving the Convent, Miss Reed continued a Catholic, and endeavored to procure admission into another Convent at Alexandria, or in that neighborhood. At page 177, she says she wrote to Miss Kennedy, "to inform her of her *afflictions* and of her reluctance to return to the bustle of the world ;" and "proposed some questions and requested her advice," and that "she could not but think the Bishop and Superior very wicked." Then follows a specimen of the artful and scheming habit of her mind, and the following expression, insinuating what she had frequently done, in her conversations, that Mary Francis was not living, but had been made way with by the Superior. "I resolved to ascertain if Mary Francis was living and happy." To this and other letters written by her to that lady, she received three in answer. Those letters have been seen by Mrs. G. Mr. Byrne and other Catholics, and probably by Mr. Croswell, which will prove the facts above stated.<sup>1</sup> They will prove also, if she dare produce them, that Miss Kennedy was not the person she is represented in Miss R's. book. These letters were written by Miss R. as a Catholic, she of course not informing M. F. of any change in her religion, and in them she advises her to go to her Confessor and take his counsel. She did so, and when he advised her to seek her living by honest industry, she turned her back on the Catholics. Now the fact that she wanted to go into another Convent, is wholly inconsistent with the idea, that her book and her conversations are intended to inculcate, that Convents were corrupt, superstitious and wicked places, and that the errors of Romanism were such as to make it her duty to write her experiences, as a warning against them. Was her conduct consistent with her language, and if not, what becomes of her credibility?

Her statements in matters that have little or nothing to do with

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<sup>1</sup> This is the lady of whom she has insinuated to many persons, both Catholic and Protestant, had been buried in a dungeon or murdered, in consequence of her supposed influence over Miss Reed, and in order to get over the contradiction of receiving letters from a dead person, to those who knew the latter facts, she suggested that the letters were forged ! And we believe that she now insinuates the same thing, for in a scurrilous communication in the Commercial Gazette of April 4, 1835, which was given to that paper for publication, by her publishers, Russell, Odiome & Co., and undoubtedly written by her publishing Committee, speaking of Mary Francis, the writer intimates that she has been made way with, notwithstanding the letters from her in Miss Reed's possession. We pledge ourselves that the public shall be informed most fully on the subject, as soon as the circumstances will possibly admit of its being done.

the Convent, and seem unimportant in themselves, are nevertheless chiefly falsehoods in direct terms, or by implication. The cases are constantly occurring, where a sentence, or even a word is made to suggest an untruth and to mislead the reader. In every thing relating to herself and family this takes place ! Those who were well acquainted with their condition, will smile at the mention of her jewelry, (page 65) as the treasures received from her dear mother ; her ten dresses, (page 95), taken from her at the Convent, and as she intimates never returned ; also, at the answer relative to her education ; (page 55) to say nothing of the family prayers, and the application of Miss H. to be kept by her as a domestic ! As to her jewelry, except the crosses given to her by her Catholic friends, it is well known to those persons, Mrs. G. P. & H. with whom she resided, that it consisted of an old pair of five shilling ear knobs, which were probably given her while in service as a domestic. So her ten dresses will dwindle to a wretched small stock ; and it can be abundantly proved, by those persons to whom she went destitute and as a beggar, that at the time she entered the Convent, all the clothes she had, which were not derived from their charity were not worth three dollars. Such is the magnifying powers of Miss R's. mind ! It is disgusting to be obliged to speak of such matters, but as she affects the lady, she has rendered it necessary. So of her education. We do not wish to be too discursive upon the matter, but we cannot help recurring to her precious verses once more, and to ask the reader, first to read page 55 of her book, and then to read the verses, and a deceit peculiar to her, and conspicuous on every page of her book will present itself.

Miss R. by her famous letter to the Editor of the Courier, copied in her book, page 29, has exposed her veracity to be impeached by Protestant testimony. She undertakes in that to justify herself against the suggestions that her stories had been instrumental in the destruction of the Convent, or that they had been extensively circulated before that event. With this view, she is made by her scribe to say, "that she had conversed with but very few persons about it, and had held no conversation of importance on the subject with but *two persons*, the Rev. Mr. C. in Boston, and a friend in the country." That "she had sometimes been pressed with questions, but had avoided them as much as possible, that she had made only general statements, such as she did not approve the institution and that the discipline was too severe, &c." She says farther, that her "manuscript had not been extensively circulated, and that she had not even permitted her sister to read it." Now if it be proved that she had told particular and very slanderous stories to any single individual, besides Mr. C. and the resident in the country, she will

stand convicted of a deliberate and wilful falsehood. The same consequences will follow upon the proof, that her manuscript had been extensively circulated previous to August 11th, 1834.

Now previous to that time, it was matter of notoriety, that stories very like those contained in her book, were the subject of common conversation in Cambridge, West Cambridge, Charlestown, Medford, and Boston. It can be proved by undoubted testimony, that threats to destroy the Convent, had been made in Medford and Charlestown for nearly a year before the event took place, (and probably much earlier,) and in consequence solely of the odium her stories had occasioned, and to revenge her ill treatment. Now this fact proves that by some means those stories had been extensively circulated. It can be abundantly proved that she told these stories to the persons with whom she resided or associated — to the teachers and pupils of the school she attended in Cambridgeport and Charlestown; — that she was in the habit of meeting small parties of friends and other curious people, and exhibit herself in prostrations, and recitations of Latin prayers. To more than one person in Cambridgeport she declared or intimated, that the nuns had attempted to poison her, while in the Convent. In a word, it seemed to be her business to attract attention to herself by these stories. And it is singular, that with the horror of a Convent and the terrible associations it must bring to her mind, she has continued to this time, to affect the deportment and manners of the nuns, and in that way, made herself conspicuous in the schools she attended. She even attempted to introduce a practice of kissing the floor at Mr. V's. school, where she acted as assistant. As to her manuscript, which she says was not extensively circulated, it is certain, that it was seen by the three teachers whose school she attended in Cambridgeport, and the families and acquaintances of two of them. It was left for indiscriminate use, at two boarding houses in that place, by Dr. H. and others of East Cambridge, and was seen by many members of Rev. Mr. Fay's and Mr. Jackson's society in Charlestown, and many persons in Boston. It was proposed at a meeting of some members of the society last mentioned, to publish her stories as a tract — a proposition which Mr. J. had the good sense to oppose. The manuscript was in his family, and we aver that any person might have seen it who had the desire. It is said in her book, by her publishers, that she had lived retired in the bosom of her family, since her elopement, &c. On the contrary few persons have lived in so many places, and conversed with so many individuals. She seemed to possess a sort of ubiquity — we hear of her every where. They say also, that her manuscript remained for nearly a year before August 11th, in the hands of her Reverend pastor —

and she told the Boston Committee much the same story. Mr. C. expressly contradicts the facts, and stated to that Committee that he had not had it for eighteen months. Such are the audacious falsehoods which are unhesitatingly published on her authority, to screen her reputation until her book shall have performed its pious office. So much for the truth of her assertions relative to the circulation of her slanders. — Mark also the inconsistency of that letter, in the statement, that “she felt it her duty to give Mrs. F. all the information in her power,” about the Convent, because she had a daughter there, and the statement, immediately following, that she sought to avoid Mrs. F. — and that when she soon after met Mrs. F. to her “disappointment,” in Mrs. F’s. own house, the very place where she ought to have been disappointed not to have seen her, she withholds all, except general information, which Mrs. F. did not ask, and gets rid of the conversation as soon as politeness would allow. How consistent! She denies the expression imputed to her by Judge F’s. letter, that she was the humble instrument in the hands of Providence to destroy the institution at Mount Benedict, and at once betrays her consciousness of the truth of it, by supposing it was obtained from her conversation with Mrs. F. which she alludes to. Now there was not the slightest allusion to Mrs. F. or to any particular conversation with any person, in the letter she was answering; — she had never, as she says, used this expression to any one; and yet she sees at once, whence it is derived, and her consciousness betrays her. If she had been well advised, she would have contented herself with a general denial; but she must attempt to show how the expression originated. She admits she said, “she was an humble instrument in the hands of Providence,” to shew her friends the truth — and yet immediately before, she affirms, she was very careful not to be the cause of excitement, that she had concealed her stories “even from her own sisters.” At one moment she is an instrument to show the truth, (meaning the stories about the Convent) to her friends, who, judging from her expressions would seem to be innumerable, and in the next, she is very careful to conceal it. — Another fact, showing the contradictions and inconsistencies which she, as all habitual liars, run into — is, that she had always an ambition to publish her stories, — that within the year after leaving the Convent, her father twice applied to the Hon. T. Fuller, then resident in Cambridge, to call and see his daughter, with a view to publication. Now from all these facts, and inconsistencies, is it not perfectly evident, that all the imputations, of which she complains, were perfectly well founded, and that the Boston Investigating Committee, and Judge F. have done her no injustice, but

have said as little to her discredit as their search after truth would permit?

We will here add another circumstance, for which we shall probably be thanked by the followers of Miss Reed. She said to a lady of unexceptionable character for veracity, who had a daughter at the Convent, "you may think it presuming in me to advise you, but I do advise you to take away your daughter from the Convent, for it will come down within a year"!!! and it was destroyed within eight or ten months of that time! Lo! gentle readers, you have a prophetess as well as a saint!

We cannot omit to notice her extraordinary testimony in Court, on Buzzell's trial, (see Rep. p. 55.) Although it was obvious she could testify nothing relative to the issue, there was a strong desire to excite the prejudices of the jury against the Convent, by Miss Reed's testimony, under pretence of discrediting the Superior's evidence. But the Court interfered and prevented her proceeding beyond a few sentences. She first states, "she lived there as a *choir sister*," a fact which her own book disproves, and which is denied by the whole community, the Bishop and others. It was impossible also, as she ought to have known, and did know, — a choir sister is a professed nun, who has taken the black veil. She was not a member of the religious community at all, as was well known to all the religious and all the lay sisters, and to the pupils. She said she had a religious name Mary Agnes, which is denied by all the Community, and the pupils never heard her called by any other name than Theresa, or Miss Reed,<sup>1</sup> — that she had books handed to her by Mr. Paine and Mrs. Graham, as from the Bishop — a fact which both Mrs. Graham and the Bishop deny. In her book she says Mrs. G. gave her two books, lettered with her new name, proving that she got her new name before she went to the Convent. In point of fact, Mr. or Mrs. Paine gave her those books, and not Mrs. G. or the Bishop. If permitted, Miss R. would have gone on, no doubt, and sworn to all the stories in her book! Is it possible, that a person who has falsified so audaciously, and called God to witness her truth, can be in a sound state of mind, and possess moral accountability? For her sake we hope such is not the case.

As to the narrative of Miss R. it is almost below criticism. To intelligent and educated persons, who know how to judge by internal evidence, it would not be necessary to say a word to disprove its credibility and to prove it a paltry jumble of inventions, and the

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<sup>1</sup> It has already been seen how and when she got the name; and the use she intended to make of it, to prove herself a sister, is obvious.

production of an extremely feeble and ill regulated mind. There is no method or arrangement, but great vagueness and incoherence. Many of its incidents are utterly insignificant; actions without motives, and effects without causes, and the very members of a sentence, often without the slightest relation to each other. To give specimens of these faults, would hardly be worth the time of the reader, as the truth of its matters of fact is the chief object of our inquiry. The attention of the reader is invited to them only to show, that confusion of mind and desultoriness are characteristic of her narrative, and to some extent, should affect its credibility.

She says in her letter to her Committee, page 37, speaking of the composition of her manuscript, that she was able at first, to make only memoranda, but in the course of about a year, — as the Committee, page 14, and her own letters make it out, — she drew it out, and endeavored to get it “*in her own simple language*” into the “form of a narrative.” If it had been a plain unvarnished tale of truth, a very few days would have sufficed, but fiction is the work of inspiration. She was obliged to wait, we suppose, till the fit came on.

A leading and remarkable trait in her book, are the insinuations and suggestions that lurk in even the apparently insignificant incidents and conversations she relates. We can only afford space to a few specimens, we do it to show the suspicious and crafty nature of her own mind, desirous of creating similar suspicions on the minds of others.

She speaks of the Superiors *throne* (only a chair!) and the Nuns approaching the Bishop or Superior kneeling and kissing their feet, &c., to create the idea of slavish fear and subserviency, with a view undoubtedly to make the Convent odious, as anti-republican. In point of fact, the Ursuline Community is a perfect democracy, as appears by their constitution. The members are elective and so is the Superior, who is merely the chief among equals, and liable at any time to be deposed by ballot. In page 147 she expresses “*a fear*” judging from the “*threats and looks*” of the Superior that she should be confined in the “*cellar*.” The reader has here three words suggesting violence, severity, and the use of the dungeon. These strange insinuations and dark expressions occur in every part of the book, by which the Superior, particularly, is charged indirectly with the odious vices of cruelty, duplicity, levity, austerity, pride, folly, caprice, dishonesty, vulgarity, stratagems, sorceries and deadly designs! — The instances are endless, and involve every body whom she has any motive to place in a false light.

She undertakes (p. 159) to give some account of the School, but admits she knows little of it. She knows, however, just enough to sustain the charge of an attempt to influence the religion of Protestant

pupils, and of severity in the discipline. She takes care not to remember the names of pupils, who were made "unhappy" by these, or some other causes. These suggestions are entirely contradicted by all those persons who have had the best means of knowing the truth, and what is strange, by Miss R. herself, in her conversations with many persons.

She pretends she was prevented seeing her sisters, when they came for that purpose, and yet she has declared to several persons, that she felt so lifted up above her relations, for a long time after she went there, that she despised and refused to see them when they called — and that she afterwards thought that her conduct had been very sinful in that respect. She hid herself from the sister who called to see her at Mrs. G's, (as mentioned in page 183) and Mrs. G. had to use her authority to give that sister an opportunity to be "overjoyed" at seeing her. She gave no notice to any of her relations, that she had left the Convent; and, while affecting to fear the Catholics would kill her, continued to live with and among them for several weeks, and has remained in their vicinity ever since. She and her Committee intimate, in sundry places, that her health was shattered by hard usage; that she suffered from cold, penances, strange looking food, &c. &c.; and that, when she eloped, she was so "pale and emaciated" she was not in a condition to see her father, and required time to recruit. She also says she showed Mrs. G. her *wounds* and her *frozen* feet, in terms intimating great ill usage; and that Mrs. G. "sympathized with her, but did not urge her to say much, as she was very *weak*" — by this expression intimating quite an exhausted state! Now, will it be believed that, in the eyes of Mrs. G. and her family, three sober, observing people, who saw her immediately before, and after her residence at the Convent, she had improved, in a remarkable degree, in apparent health and flesh? Will it be credited, that the frozen feet proved to be chilblains, to which she had been subject many years? — and that she never thought to mention the sprained wrist? Yet such is the case, as the public will soon learn, by testimony taken in the most solemn form. It would seem as if it were beneath her genius, to deal in plain matters of fact; — so strong is her propensity to proceed in her own way, that when she eloped, (p. 174) she undertook to climb a fence, although there was a gate close by her. She talks about porters and dogs, as making it difficult to escape — (p. 152.) She had been at the Convent very often for more than a year, a suppliant, on foot and alone, and knew, as well as every other visiter there, that porters and dogs were never employed — that the gate stood usually open, and a dog or man was seldom seen. There was nothing on earth to prevent her going down into the road, as honest

benefits, she presents herself in a character which entitles her to no sympathy and renders it absolutely necessary in defence of innocence and truth, to call things by their right names, and to do what is attempted in this review of her work. It is admitted by herself, that after long solicitation she obtained admittance to the Convent as an object of charity ;—that she was fed, clothed and instructed, by the Ursuline Sisters, who could have had no motive on earth, but a charitable one, for she had neither property, or friends, or influence. She had neither mental capacity, docility, or solidity of character, to permit her even to become a member of their Community, and she never received the least encouragement to that effect. Finding her hopes disappointed, she elopes in a dishonorable manner, and either from revenge, vanity, or as a means of living, commences the abominable work of ruining her benefactors by the private circulation of unfounded calumnies. Even if her stories had been well founded, she was the last person who should have been the willing instrument to diffuse them to the prejudice of those, who rescued her from poverty and want. The precepts of the religion which she so zealously professes, and so flagrantly dishonours, should have held her hand, and the voice of gratitude should have persuaded her to a better course. Taking it for granted, that we have established her total want of credibility and the falsehood of her charges, her conduct presents a case of monstrous ingratitude, that most hateful of vices, and reckless wickedness. If she be a moral agent, which charity has led us to doubt, she affords an instance to illustrate the doctrine of total depravity, such as the world has seldom seen. She exhibits the reality of the fabled adder, torpid with cold, that pierced with its venomous fangs, the benevolent bosom, which had warmed it into life.

But we think hardly less ill of the persons who have encouraged her in this course. No doubt many, perhaps most, have been imposed upon by her apparent sincerity, and sanctimonious manners ; but that men of some standing in society, should have lent their countenance to so anti-christian a proceeding, is extremely to be reprobated and deplored. The conflagration at Mount Benedict, effected by a banditti of robbers and incendiaries, if it had found no abettors and apologists afterwards among the orderly and respectable portion of society, would have been comparatively a trifle. But it was only the signal for a religious persecution, and the display of a spirit of intolerance and hatred, that have set man against man, broken in upon the harmony of society, and inflicted a deep stain upon the reputation of the community for intelligence and virtue. The brands from that burning have set fires throughout the country, that seem already to have consumed all the



christian virtues and to threaten, that religion itself will not escape unscathed. Public justice has been mocked, and the religious zealous, who have looked only to the destruction of catholicity, in their sayings and doings, may find to their sorrow, when too late, that they have been the means of undermining the security of private rights, public order, and the religion they venerate. It is in vain to attempt to shut our eyes to the truth; the enemies of our republican institutions, — of the christian faith will not fail to pour into our ears, their ridicule of our boasted superiority in the former, and our pretended toleration in the latter. We shall stand exposed and helpless, bound hand and foot by our own folly, to hear the sneers of the one, and the rebukes of the other.

So far as discussions upon the subject of Catholicism interest the public, we are happy to see them going on. The effect is to bring out the whole strength of argument upon one side or the other, and the public mind becomes enlightened upon a topic deeply interesting to the inquiring Christian; but when resort is had to such side wind attempts to *crush* a sect, by imposing false tales, with regard to members of that sect, upon the public, it is time for the oppressed to forget the attack upon their religion, in the more direct defence of themselves. The Catholic religion has nothing to fear from Miss Reed's book, and nothing that requires of its believers a defence; it is private character and conduct that is assailed — as dear to the innocent ladies attacked, as the religion which supports them under the persecution they have suffered. They ask none, who read this vindication, to be convinced of the good influence of Catholicity or its foundations; but they do call upon the intelligent, however much they may despise the faith of the Ursulines, to do them the justice of carefully weighing the defence they here put forth against a torrent of calumny, that has rushed upon them, as individuals. They are desirous that Miss Reed's book may be read, not glanced over, with a pre-determination as to its truth or falsehood, but carefully and discriminately read, being satisfied that, in a land whose people are universally distinguished for the exercise of their intellectual capacities and judgments upon every subject, they will come to a right understanding of the character of that unfortunate girl, who, for the last three years, has availed herself of the general prejudice, prevalent among Protestants, to slander, defame and misrepresent the Ursuline Community.

## NOTE.

Miss Reed's publishing committee have corrected the date of August 5, 1831, by a substitution of August 7. *They say it was a mistake, and that Miss Reed immediately observed it, on seeing it in print.* Is there one of her publishing committee, blinded as we believe some of them to be, willing to come forward and swear, that Miss Reed never saw the *proof impressions* of her work, or that she did not see the words "August 5, 1831," in print, before it was too late to correct the error? — or, if not soon enough for that correction, that she did not see the words in time to add an errata; in binding up the sheets? No, we feel assured of this fact. But the change, from the 5th to the 7th, does not help her in the least; it was a *change of error*, and this appears, first, from her conversation about the article in the Jesuit, (which was August 6th) with the Superior, which she says took place during a visit; and from her own statement, she did not go to the Convent to reside for some time after that. "After this conversation, she says, she (the Superior) wrote a letter to my father." "At my next interview," (*after the one in which the conversation was held*) "with the Superior, she however told me my father had become reconciled to my remaining with them two or three quarters"; all this after August 6th, 1831. Could she have gone to the Convent to reside August 7th? Add to this the testimony of Dr. Byrne, confirmed by this testimony furnished by herself, and it is conclusive. "She states, (page 66) that she stood sponsor for Mrs. Graham's daughter. Now this, *according to the record of it, made at the time*, was September 4, 1831. Further: I received three notes from the Superior, relative to Miss Reed, bearing date August 12th, September 2d, and September 11th, 1831. In the one dated September 2d, the Superior writes: "I think it best that Miss Reed should make her confession and communion before she enters;" and in the one of September 11th: "If she (Miss Reed) has made it (her first communion) to-day, will you be kind enough to direct her to come immediately after high mass?"

Reader, are these letters forged? And if they are, how are the circumstances to be disposed of? Is Dr. Byrne *the forger as well as the liar*? Was all this foreseen, provided for, and arranged, to contradict Miss Reed on a point, material only to show the deliberate manner in which she states an untruth, and persists in it? The reader will remember, that there is no qualification of her remark as to the time; and now, since she has had an opportunity deliberately to reflect, she fixes upon the 7th of August, as the time of her entering the Convent.





## A N S W E R .

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As the head of the Ursuline Community, I have no wish or desire to conceal that the attack of Miss Reed upon my character and conduct, and her foul aspersions upon the religious order to which I belong, have given me and my religious sisters many hours of anxious pain and suffering. The last few months have been prolific with injuries and persecutions inflicted upon our inoffensive association of unprotected females. We have not, however, yet become so habituated to the contumely and abuse that is daily heaped upon us, as to be weary of maintaining, before the world, that innocence and purity of conduct and motive, which form our only shield against those who, from fanatic zeal, or baser motives, are endeavoring to crush us. It is a duty that I owe to myself, and the Community of which I form the responsible head, to assert, before the world, the falsehoods and baseness of Miss Reed, and to prove them to be so, as far as the nature of the charges against us will admit of proof. Of herself, Miss Reed is nothing: as an instrument in the hands of designing men, she is capable of extensive mischief and injury. Her falsehoods did us no harm, as long as they were circulated, by her alone, among those who were *acquainted with her character*; they become important only when adopted by an irresponsible association, well known, however, as leading agitators and sectarians.

Possessed of a flighty and unsteady disposition of mind, disinclined to the work and labor, which the extreme poverty of her parents made it necessary for her to perform, Miss R. has, as appears from her own statements, indulged herself in foolish and romantic reveries, the principal part of which have consisted of a life of seclusion, where she might enjoy her

lieving that "her return to the world would be opposed," but *knew*, on the contrary, that she *must* leave at the expiration of six months from the day she entered. There was no obstacle to her communicating with her friends; but, as she was a mere beginner in writing and composition, she preferred not; or, in other words, did not like the trouble. She did not leave the Convent in February, but January 18th, 1832.

(Page 7.) Our prices for education were at the *lowest*, not the *highest* rate. Should a young lady, "crossed in love, or disappointed in securing a fashionable establishment in marriage," apply to become a "nun," *she could not be admitted*; nor can "wealthy parents, who have more daughters than they can portion, in the style they have been brought up, find it convenient or *practicable* to persuade the least beautiful to take the veil." Our rules forbid us to receive any who have these sinister motives.

(Page 8.) I declared, in my testimony, on the trial of the rioters, that the vows of my religious order were poverty, chastity, obedience, and the instruction of female youth—not "poverty, chastity, and obedience; to separate ourselves from the world, and to follow the instructions of the Superior."

To purchase the land of Mount Benedict, and to erect the Convent, all our funds were laid out. The "profits" of the school were not employed solely in the support of eight nuns and two novices. With those "profits," furniture, instruments, books, and various conveniences for the school, were procured: the land which, in 1827, was, literally, *a barren hill*, was cultivated and embellished with the same "profits." To accomplish this, one, two, or three men were constantly kept on the farm, at the rate of twelve, fourteen, sixteen, or eighteen dollars a month, besides their board; and, in the spring and summer, ten or twelve men, for months at a time, were employed, at a dollar a day. We supposed that, in beautifying Mount Benedict, we were manifesting due respect for the town in which we were situated, and an interest in furthering its importance. With the "profits of the school," provisions were purchased for the pupils, as well as for the

Community, and for male and female domestics. Those same "profits" enabled the Community to clothe and educate, gratuitously, from one to six pupils, every year (not Catholics, exclusively). I was likewise a member of two *Protestant* charitable associations. Petitions and subscriptions were often brought to the Convent, which I always signed. No person, in distress, ever came to the Convent, who was sent away unrelieved. Many times, when a pupil, after entering, was obliged to return home before the expiration of a quarter, and when parents have, unexpectedly, been called away, the amount of the quarterly bills has been returned. Journeys to distant places have been paid for poor people—wives wishing to join their husbands, husbands their wives, and men and women their families. All these circumstances were unknown, except to the trustees, the members of the Community, and the beneficiaries—as we are told in Scripture, "that our left hand should not know what our right hand doeth." We had not sixty pupils constantly; but the number varied, and was sometimes as low as thirty. On an average, however, we had about forty.

We do make a vow of poverty; but the word *poverty* may admit of various modifications. It is well understood, when we take that vow, that we do not engage to live like mendicants. We make use of the *necessaries* of life, but deny ourselves its *superfluities*. Our food is *plain*, but *wholesome*; and our clothing unexpensive and without ornament. Things in the house are used in *common*; and we consider ourselves particularly bound, by this vow, to keep our hearts "detached from the things below, and fixed on those above."

(Page 8.) Our object in embracing the Ursuline Order was, with more facility to lead a life of piety; and, at the same time, to do good to society, by promoting the education of female youths, without distinction of *religious belief*.

(Page 9.) Every one that wished to become acquainted "with the whole interior discipline of both pupils and teachers," could easily obtain information from any of the young ladies who have been in the Institution since the school was opened to the present day.

Many ladies and gentlemen, the parents and friends of the pupils, were introduced into the interior of the Convent; but it would have been an interruption to the pupils, as well as an encroachment upon the time and duties of the teachers, had these visits been frequent.

As we were not indebted to the bounty of the public for the erection of our Convent, we did not consider there was any obligation to *invite* or *permit* them to investigate our *private concerns*; but, as the property was our own, we considered that we were at liberty (with the approbation and concurrence of the trustees) to manage our affairs as we pleased.

Though I am a foreigner, I was not "brought up in the seclusion of a convent." On the contrary, I was educated in the good common schools of the time; and few females, perhaps, have travelled and mingled with the world more than it was my lot to do, before I became a member of the Ursuline Order.

I did not introduce the *Community* or *myself* into Boston; but, in April, 1824, I came at the earnest solicitation of the former Superior and her sisters. They had then been established nearly four years; and the Superior, having lost two of her sisters, and being for a long time ill of consumption, and seeing her last hour approach, wished me to replace her. I acceded to her wishes, but did so *very reluctantly*.

(Page 11.) The contents of this page are erroneous. The author says, "There are pupils from the Nunnery, who declare, that serious attempts were made to affect their religious opinions." No such attempts were ever made, and the rules of our Institutions forbid it.

It continues;—"And, in truth, could it possibly be otherwise, with ingenuous girls, living in the romantic atmosphere of a Roman Catholic Nunnery, with all the mysterious and externally-imposing ceremonies of that religion constantly passing before their eyes and ears, in a portion of which they daily participated?" We had no mysterious and externally-imposing ceremonies, but simply had divine service on



Sunday mornings, during which time the pupils were directed to read their Bibles: consequently, the ceremonies of our religion were not constantly "passing before their eyes and ears," nor were they obliged "daily to participate in a portion of them."

Miss Reed, even, could have enlightened the Committee on this point, as she says she saw but little of the scholars, and mentions as an extraordinary fact, that "they were sometimes at vacation permitted to enter the Community and embrace the Religieuse." p. 159.

(Page 12.) Miss Reed's health was not "seriously impaired by religious austerities and seclusion." So far from practising the least austerity, while in the Convent, she had a great plenty, and the best of every thing, with regard to diet, as she appeared very delicate, when she entered, and said she had, for a long time, been most cruelly treated by her family. She was not permitted to do any laborious work; but, after she entered, finding she was averse to study, and that she had a great difficulty in learning, she was permitted to attend to music, as she said her friends thought she had a talent for it, and would be pleased to have that talent cultivated. We thought, likewise, as she was not a person calculated to make any great exertion of body or mind, that teaching music would be a pleasant and genteel means of support to her. She continued, however, to devote a part of her time to the study of spelling and grammar.

It is a fact, and all the pupils who were in the Institution at the time, and Mrs. Graham, to whose house she afterwards went, can bear witness to it, that, before leaving the Convent, she was quite fleshy, had a healthy and florid countenance, and had improved much in her personal appearance; whereas, when she entered, she was feeble, pale and emaciated.

(Page 34.) The "Jesuit" of 1831 does not say that when a Catholic changes his religion, he "is to be driven, *by persecutions*, to intemperance, madness or suicide." The writer of the piece alluded to, supposed that these might be the consequences of *remorse*, but not of *persecution*, for our religion does not sanction such want of *charity*.

(Page 37.) The first time I ever saw Miss Reed, was in December, 1830. She requested, several other times, to have an interview with me, but was refused, and told that we wished to have nothing to do with her. She conversed with the portress, and told her that she was a destitute and persecuted being; that her father had driven her from his house; that her brothers and sisters in Boston had cast her off; and that if I did not take her, she had no place but the street. She applied to Rev. Mr. Byrne, in Charlestown; and, having prevailed on him to write to me, requesting I would have a conversation with her, I consented to see her *twice* in the course of *nine* months. In each of these visits she solicited, *most earnestly*, to be admitted as a servant; <sup>1</sup> and when I told her she was too delicate, she assured me she both *could* and *would* be able to wash, iron, scrub the floors, *and do other laborious work*.

She spoke much of her father's cruelty to her; but I advised her to return to him, to beg his forgiveness, and be in future a dutiful daughter. She said he would not allow her to step her foot in his house, and that he did not care where she went.<sup>2</sup> The Rt. Rev. Bishop and Rev. Mr. Byrne were moved to compassion by her stories, and requested me to do something for her, saying she was a destitute girl, and might be exposed, if left in that unprotected state. I told her it was out of the question to think of being received as a *servant*; that we already had sufficient help, even supposing she were capable of discharging that employment; but that I would make an offer, to her father, of giving her six months' schooling. I did write to him, but never received an answer to my letter. He told the bearer that he would call on me, but he did not do so; and when, in my third interview with Miss Reed, I told her I had not had an answer from her father, she told me not to expect any; that he was a violent man;<sup>3</sup> that he wished to discard her forever; but that, as she

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<sup>1</sup> This is not the first time of her going out to service

<sup>2</sup> She told the same stories to the family where she was before entering the Convent

<sup>3</sup> As a proof of his violence, see "Six Months in a Convent," p. 62.

was eighteen, she was at liberty to decide for herself.<sup>1</sup> He delivered a message to Mrs. L., namely, that I ought to have nothing to do with his daughter; but that message was not transmitted to me until five months after, when Miss Reed had left the Convent some time.

After *reluctantly* acceding to her wishes, and acting from the purest motives of charity and friendship, I do think it very *ungrateful* in Miss Reed, to misrepresent, as she has done, every thing that she witnessed in the Convent; and to slander those from whom she never received an unkind word, but who manifested towards her every mark of kindness.

(Page 38.) I did not answer Mr. Farley, that we were preparing Miss Reed to instruct in *the* school, but in *a* school.<sup>2</sup>

With regard to the receipts for sixty scholars, we never had that number, except once; and then not longer than two weeks.

Very few of our pupils attended to any of the extra branches of education, except music and French, for instruction in which a mere *trifle* was charged; and when the various expenses of the Institution, as before detailed, are taken into consideration, I think all will agree that, with small education and board-fees for the pupils, it required some economy to keep the Community entirely free from debt.

It is a mistake, that Miss Reed "was well skilled in ornamental needle-work." She could do a little lace-work, like some school-girls, but appeared totally ignorant of every other kind of "ornamental work." She did a few sprigs on a robe, by way of amusement, during the hours of recreation; but she never made any ornaments for the altar; therefore, "her industry, in that department," could not have been "a full equivalent for all the *charity* she received at the Convent." If the editor of the "Jesuit" said she was "very

1 On page 68, Miss Reed admits the letter being written to her father, which proves, in connection with her own statements in various places, how anxiously it was desired not to have her, except by her parent's consent, and why she told so many harsh stories of her father's treatment to her.

2 In my testimony, however, I did make one mistake as to the time when I first saw Miss Reed. I have correctly stated the time on page 8.

capable of obtaining a livelihood by her knowledge of the various branches of needle-work," he relied, entirely, on what she said of herself.

The story of meeting her brother on a certain bridge, originated from *herself*: she told it to a great many persons, and related the same to me, as well as to the other members of the Community.

(Page 40.) If I "admitted, under oath, that Miss Reed would know every thing which took place during the time she was with us, excepting what occurred in the school-room," I did not, thereby, give sanction to the misrepresentations and falsities which she has circulated.

(Page 41.) Our dwelling "was accessible, at proper times, to the parents and friends of its numerous inmates." When pupils were sick, they were always permitted to receive visits from their parents or guardians, and the school-room, sleeping and eating-rooms were likewise visited by them. Such visits were not frequent, as before stated, for they would have been an interruption to the regular operation of the school.

We had no "public exercise of the scholars," as the largest room in the Convent did not *conveniently* hold all the pupils, with the Community.

The thousand dollars in my desk, at the destruction of the Convent, were destined, with what we might afterwards be enabled to add to that sum, for the erection of a building, or large hall, for *public examination*. Four hundred dollars of that sum were likewise due to Mrs. B., the instructress in dancing.

If the Hon. S. P. P. Fay "never saw the school at the Convent, and never, but once, went beyond the parlor," it was not because he might not have done so, had his avocations permitted. He always appeared satisfied with the progress that his daughter had made, and expressed no wish to investigate the interior of the school.

(Page 42.) We did not "freely admit to our most private apartments, at all times of day or night, a number of

clergymen :” on the contrary, at the time of the destruction of the Convent, we did not know, *even by sight*, any of the Catholic clergy in Boston, except the Rt. Rev. Bishop, and one other clergyman, who performed divine service for us when the Rt. Rev. Bishop was absent from the city. It is a solemn truth, that no man, clergyman or secular, was ever permitted to be in the Convent after eight o’clock, P. M. (and *very seldom* after seven o’clock), except once on Christmas night, and the evening on which Miss Harrison had left the Convent, when I sent for the Rt. Rev. Bishop, to apprise him of the circumstance. It was after seven o’clock, that I received information of her being at West Cambridge.

(Page 43.) There was no rule which obliged us “to knock three times before entering an apartment, and to wait for the knocks to be returned ;” nor did we do so.

(Page 50.) Speaking of when we went to Mount Benedict, Miss Reed says, “We were in school, but had permission to look at them as they passed.” We passed at five o’clock in the morning, and school did not commence till a much later hour.<sup>1</sup> She says, on the same page, “By the word *ignorant* is meant what they term *heretics*.” This is the first time that I ever knew such a definition was attached to the word *ignorant*. Miss Reed’s memory is not the least surprising of her accomplishments.<sup>2</sup>

(Page 54.) When Miss Reed visited Mount Benedict, I did not embrace her, nor did I sit, but I stood for a few

1 This can be proved by the lady who kept the school, who can and will inform inquirers as to Miss Reed’s character for *veracity and acquirements*, even at that early period.

2 It would gratify a laudable curiosity to know what the “*other reasons*,” p. 51, were, that caused Miss Reed to visit New Hampshire, and who sent her up there. At this page we meet with her only attempt at eloquence and fine writing. “Memory oft brings to view and faithfully delineates those hours of retirement and happiness,” (where ? in New Hampshire ? No ! ) “which I should spend, were I an inhabitant of a cloister.” This is a memory worth possessing, that delights to bring to view and delineates hours which it *imagined* it should spend. It is a very good memory that brings to view the hours spent ; how much better is that, which presents the hours, we imagined we should spend, and thus realizes our visions ! It is equal to the echo, which, to the words ‘How do you do ?’ returns, ‘Very well, I thank you.’

moments only, to say that I thought it best she should not come to the Convent, even as a visitor, lest her friends should suppose that I had enticed her. I did not ask the questions which she there says I did; and, as to the expression, "O, it feels more like a pancake than any thing else," it is one of her own delicate fabrications: those who know me will never believe that such an expression came from me.

(Page 55.) She did not say that she "wished to go into the school attached to the Nunnery, on the same terms as other pupils, until she had made sufficient progress to take the veil, and become a recluse," but asked admittance as a *servant*, even after I proposed, at the third interview, that she should be a *pupil*.<sup>1</sup>

(Page 56.) "At a subsequent interview," I did not remark that I believed she "had a vocation for a religious life," for I did not think she had: it appeared to me, from the first time that I saw her, that she was a romantic and ignorant girl; and it was from this persuasion, that I told her I wished to have nothing to do with her. When she said she wished to be a Catholic, and desired some instructions from me, I referred her to the Catholic clergy, saying we had no time, and did not give such instructions then, though we had done so formerly. I did not mention a Mr. R., who would introduce her to the Rt. Rev. Bishop, and had never heard of the gentleman, until *she* spoke of him, said she was acquainted with him, and would get him to introduce her. I did not say that "the Bishop or Mr. R. would discuss the matter with her father, and reconcile him to Catholicity."<sup>2</sup>

(Page 59.) She did not "call upon me to make me acquainted with her conversation with the Bishop, and with her

<sup>1</sup> She first went to the Convent, according to her own statement, pp. 52, 53, 54, with an acquaintance who had been "a domestic in Mr. H. J. R.'s family."

<sup>2</sup> Mr. R., she says, "desired I would secrete the paper on which the texts were quoted." This is one of the numerous instances, where a thing must be *secretly* done, and where the caution was idle. Mr. R. called, she says, at her father's house, without any secrecy, and yet two or three texts, that are in every Bible, and might have been turned to, are handed her, and she is told to secrete the paper!

refusal of the Catechism.”<sup>1</sup> I likewise disavow the following observations on page 60, and I certainly did not embrace her.

(Page 61.) She was not “a constant visitor at the Convent;” and I never sent for her more than once, which was the third time that I saw her. She came up, unexpectedly, one day (the second time that I ever saw her), when the Rt. Rev. Bishop was on the land. He requested me to advance and see what she wanted, but said he did not wish to have any conversation with her.<sup>2</sup> I did not embrace her at all;—far from doing so “in the most affectionate manner.” It was at this time that she told me, if I did not take her, that she would throw herself into the canal, or kill herself in some other way. I told her, these were no expressions for a Christian, and that, so far from gaining upon me by such language, she only persuaded me the more firmly, that I ought to have nothing to do with her. She was known as Theresa Reed at this time.<sup>3</sup>

1 She unwittingly tells of her going to the Bishop, and if any one will read the conversation she details, they will see the propriety of his conduct. She goes there, as one professing to be desirous of becoming a nun. Does he encourage her? No! He asks her, if she knows what the nature of the duties of a nun are,—how long she had been considering the matter,—her opinion on the Catholic faith she was about to adopt, and the opinion of her friends. All this was peculiarly proper,—then comes this remarkable sentence. “As my feelings were easily wrought upon, more particularly at this time, questions were put to me, which more mature deliberation leads me to think were put under the impression that I was very ignorant, and which were very unpleasant for me to answer.” If any other questions were put to her, I should like to know what they were,—if no others were put but those of this general nature, I readily understand why mature consideration leads her to think they were put under the impression she was very ignorant, and which were very unpleasant for her to answer: the questions most probably discovered her entire ignorance of the vocation she sought, of the tenets of the faith she wished to adopt, and the exposure of her ignorance was, doubtless, unpleasant to a *sensitive creature*, whose feelings were easily wrought upon.

2 The first interview probably satisfied the Bishop.

3 There is an amusing circumstance in relation to Miss Reed's names. She was baptized at the Episcopal Church in Cambridge, under the name of Rebecca Theresa. Neither father, mother, brother or sister, were her sponsors. When she became a Catholic, she asked Father Byrne for a second baptism, which he refused, stating to her, that her first baptism was as efficacious as if performed in the Catholic form. But she was not to be daunted in this way. She asked him if the baptism would have been good, if the clergyman had used no water. He told her it would not. Then, said she, I have not been properly baptized, for the clergyman used no water at my baptism. Afterwards, before a number of persons in open church, weeks, if not months, before her entering the Convent, Father B., reciting that whereas she had before passed through the ceremony of baptism in the Episcopal Church, which, if duly performed, was, in the sight of God, a

(Page 67.) She told a long story of the persecutions she had to endure from her friends, as well as the unkind feelings and expressions of Mr. E. against us and our religion ; but I neither felt nor manifested displeasure ; nor did Mrs. Mary John, or Mary Benedict, who were present. As to jewelry of hers, that she speaks of, I never saw any ;—the poverty of her parents was such as not to allow it to be supposed to extend further than to a pair of ear-rings.

(Page 78.) I did not say to her, “O, you will die a martyr to the cause of truth ;” for I had no supposition of her death.

I did not tell her, “that her father had become reconciled to her remaining with us two or three quarters, after which he would inform us whether he would consent to have her stay there longer, as a teacher of music.” There was no conversation about her being a teacher of music : she had never taken lessons, and it was not likely that she would be *competent* to that employment *in six months*.<sup>1</sup>

(Page 79.) I told her, in order to remove all unpleasant feelings of *dependence*, that she could be of use to the Community, by her needle, when not employed in study, and that we did not wish the assistance of her friends. During the four months that she passed with us, however, she did very little needle-work.

good and sufficient baptism ; and whereas she had stated that, in said ceremony, she was not baptized with water, which, if true, would render null the ceremony, declared, if all these things were true, and in case said first baptism was thus invalid, he baptized her by the name of Mary Agnes Theresa, a name by her chosen.

1 Pp. 59, 60. When she called upon the Bishop, he gave directions to Mr. R., as she says, to purchase for her a Catechism of the Catholic church, a book containing the rudiments of a faith she wished to adopt, and which, it is apparent, she knew nothing about. She refused it, but why, it is impossible to divine, for, a week after, she expressed to me the same strong desire to become an inmate of the Convent. On p. 62, she says she saw the Bishop and Lady Superior, and at that time, she thought them “the most angelic persons living.” Her mind had changed towards the Bishop without any assignable cause, in the most miraculous manner. After this conversation, she returned to her father, who was much displeased with the steps she had taken (what steps?), and *bade her renounce all connection with the Catholics, or leave her friends*. She adopted the latter course, and *went* finally to Mrs. G.’s ; and hence arose her lie, that she had been turned out of doors.



I did not invite her to the Convent, but said that I consented to it, and that she could enter on the 11th of September. I promised to do all that I could for her, but made no engagement of "protecting her forever, and particularly from the persecution of the *heterodox*."

She often, after entering the Convent, made such extravagant expressions as these:—"O, if I could take a cross and go through the streets of Boston, making known the true faith! O, if I could show my zeal for Jesus Christ, and convert my Protestant friends! O, if I could preach to the heretics, and make them know their errors!" When I told her it was wrong to speak in this way; that it was enthusiastic, and that she should not hold forth insinuations against any denomination of Christians, but have charity for all, she was astonished, and said she thought such opinions too liberal.

(Page 70.) I told her that I had consulted with the Rt. Rev. Bishop, with regard to the expediency of placing her in the senior or junior department, and that we had concluded to let her remain with ourselves, as she was quite a young woman; that she would feel unpleasantly, being very ignorant, to be subjected to the criticism of the senior pupils; that the same objection might exist, with regard to her situation with the junior scholars,<sup>1</sup> many of whom were intelligent, fine children; and that, moreover, on account of the disparity of age, she might not be happy in their society. She rejoiced, that "so great a privilege" was extended to her; and said we were making her one of the happiest of beings.

I did not say, that she would be received as the other sisters were, and that they were to support themselves by their talents and industry.

Neither I nor my sisters recollect ever to have heard Mrs. Mary Ursula say *daoun* for *down*. She is an elderly lady, educated in the *old school*; and, it is true, pronounces some

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<sup>1</sup> At the town school, near the Convent, which she attended at the age of fourteen, she could not read as well as children at the age of six.

words in the *old style*; but when any observation was ever made to her about it, it was done kindly, as sisters, in a *private family*, would do to each other. We never supposed, when Miss Reed was with us, that she was a *spy*, who, at a future period, would turn *common-place* and *innocent conversations* into *tyrannical* and *abusive language*, and make her reports accordingly.

Neither Mrs. Mary Ursula nor the other sisters were obliged to kneel down and kiss the floor: Miss Reed would make it appear, that "kissing the floor" was an important and frequent occupation of the inmates of the Community. It was not the case; and even were it so, it is an innocent thing, and can be censured by no one, particularly when *purely a voluntary act*. The remarks upon this subject are intended, I presume, to caricature Catholic forms of worship.

It is singular that the inmates of the Community should be so far duped, as to allow themselves to *tremble* in approaching me; particularly, as it has depended *on them, entirely*, since the first three years that I have been their Superior, to depose me, and to choose another in my stead, should I, by word or action, have rendered myself obnoxious to their censure.

(Page 71.) "The latter" (meaning, I suppose, Mrs. Mary Austin) "was both teacher and pupil." This is incorrect: she was like the other members of the Community.

The following never took place. "She then desired me to kneel down, and take the following obligation: I do, with the grace and assistance of Almighty God, renounce the world forever, and place myself under your protection, from this day, to consecrate myself to his honor and glory, in the house of God, and to do whatever obedience prescribes, and tell no one of this obligation but Mr. B. in confession."

I have no recollection of the pocket album, or of the fifteen dollars.

No such visit, as that spoken of in page 72, ever took place; and she entered September 11th, instead of August 5th. She agrees that she entered on Sunday; but on examining the cal-

endar for 1831, it is found, that the fifth of August falls on *Friday*.<sup>1</sup>

She was not "requested to kneel and continue her devotions, until the Superior made her appearance."

The "large crucifix, made of bone, which I was afterwards informed was made of the bones of saints," was actually *paper*; and this is the first time that I ever heard of its being made of bone.

"She took from her toilet a religious garb, which she placed upon my head, and bade me kiss it, saying it had been blessed by the Bishop." I had no toilet; and I placed on her head a cap, which I am sure the Rt. Rev. Bishop never saw. She wore a cap, as it is a regulation that any individual, who is admitted into our Community for a certain time, and is separated from the pupils, should bear this distinction.

(Page 73.) In putting on her cap, I pronounced no "short Latin prayer." Miss Stimpson was not kept, for she had an aunt and friends in Boston, who said they would receive her at any time. I made no attempt to deceive Miss Reed, by saying "she had gone to another order;" nor can I conceive what inducement I could have had, either trifling or important, to impose upon her by such a story.

(Page 74.) There was no "office of adoration to the Blessed Virgin." Catholics *honor*, in a special manner, the Virgin Mary, as she is the mother of Christ; but they do not *adore* her. *Adoration* they pay to none but God.<sup>2</sup>

On going into the refectory, the Community do not, "after

<sup>1</sup> Miss R.'s accuracy is remarkable. She says (p. 67), on one of her visits to the Community before residing, she had a conversation about a piece in the Jesuit, which is published in the preface of her book. The date of it is August 6, 1831. According to her statement, it was not until some time after, that she became an inmate of the Convent; and yet she fixes the date at August 5, 1831, a day before the article in the Jesuit appeared.

<sup>2</sup> As to the stories on this page about the pear, it is a little singular that Miss R. should have learned the rules of the Convent the first hour of her admission, and that a candidate for the order was ignorant of them.

saying Latin, kneel and kiss the floor, at a signal given by the Superior on her snuff-box."

The conversation, with regard to the words "In nomine Domini nostri Jesu Christe," has been entirely fabricated by Miss Reed.<sup>1</sup>

(Page 75.) No such things ever occurred in the Convent as performing "several devotions, kissing the floor, and repeating Latin, while the angelus was ringing;" nor had we rules "enclosed in a gilt frame."

(Page 76.) We had no such rules as those Miss Reed has specified in this and the following page. The fourth, ninth and tenth, were generally practised, but were not among the "*rules*." The rules of our order are printed in the Appendix.

(Page 78.) We never knelt in the presence of the Bishop, except two or three times a year, to ask his benediction.

"His Holiness the Bishop," and "the Father Confessor," never concerned themselves about our diet; and we had no "permission" to obtain from them "to gratify our appetites."

There was no rule which forbade us "to approach or look out of the window of the Monastery." This may have originated from Miss Reed being told not to waste too much time in looking out of the windows, instead of studying her lessons.

No sandals and haircloth were worn, and no punishments inflicted "upon ourselves with our girdles."

The Community slept on *good*, not *hard* mattresses, purchased at Mr. Foster's, in Charlestown. Each member of the Community had the following complement of bed-clothes — sheets, pillow-cases, four blankets, a comforter, and counterpane. When the weather was severe, those who wished for

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<sup>1</sup> The remarks, in the note of Miss Reed, in which she says, that the Superior told her that she should *not indulge curiosity*, is one of the thousand that are stated, having neither point nor meaning. If the term *idle curiosity* had been used, a well-merited reproach might have been conveyed, perhaps; taking away the word *idle*, leaves it pointless and absurd. Notwithstanding, in reply to her question, the Superior tells her she must not indulge her curiosity, she, nevertheless, goes on, in the same breath, and satisfies by a full answer, whether true or false, her inquiry.

more covering could ask for it, and it was never denied. In proof of this, I shall relate the following circumstance. One cold day, I asked Miss Reed how she had slept the preceding night. She said her feet had been cold. I was surprised; and, telling her I feared that her bed had not been properly attended to, I asked her to specify what bed-clothes she had; to which she replied, "Cotton and flannel sheets, five blankets, two comforters, and a counterpane." This occurrence is well recollected by those members of the Community who were present, to all of whom it was a subject of great amusement.

No person at Mt. Benedict, to my knowledge, ever walked with pebbles in her shoes, or walked kneeling. There was no rule forbidding "*to touch any thing* without permission."

(Page 79.) I believe rule 9th, "never to gratify our curiosity, or exercise our thoughts on any subject, without our spiritual director's knowledge and advice, never to desire food or water between portions," is too absurd to obtain credit with the most prejudiced or ignorant:—"never to gratify our curiosity, or exercise our thoughts on any subject, without our spiritual director's knowledge."—By this, it would appear that an arrangement was to be made, each Sunday morning, for the thoughts of the entire week.

It was seldom that any food was taken *between meals*, by the inmates of the Community; but if an individual, on account of sickness or debility, found it necessary to take something, all she had to do was to ask for it, and it was always given.

There was no rule obliging us, "on leaving the Community, to take holy water from the altar of the Blessed Virgin, and make the sign of the cross," though it was sometimes done.

No member of our Community was ever brought before the Bishop for committing faults.

We could smile when we pleased; and, at recreation, we could even laugh *very heartily*, without supposing that we thereby violated "religious decorum."

(Page 79.) "Should the honored Mother, the Superior, detect a Religieuse whose mind is occupied with worldly

thoughts, or who is negligent in observing the rules of the Monastery, which are requisite and necessary to her perseverance and perfection in a religious life, she should immediately cause her to retire to her cell, where she could enter into a retreat." — Rule 12th.

I was not aware, till reading this passage, that I was so highly gifted as to be able to "read the secrets of hearts." Nor have our cells been discovered, though the premises, one would suppose, have been sufficiently searched.

(Page 80.) The next morning after Miss Reed entered, was Monday morning, not "holy day morning;" and we rose at 4 o'clock during the entire year, "holy day mornings" not excepted.

(Page 81.) *Complin* was not a *morning* prayer; therefore not recited in the morning. No confessions were made to me; but the members of the Community acknowledged to me slight omissions of duty, and in return received my advice.

I had no *throne*, but always sat in a chair: the other members of the Community, likewise, sat on chairs and benches, not "on their feet."

No one ever repeated to me the form, commencing on page 81, and continuing on page 82.

I was never called *Holy Mother*. The inmates of the Community did not kiss my feet, after acknowledging their actual faults,<sup>1</sup> nor did they make a cross with their tongues on the floor.

We took our meals on all days (Fridays included) sitting at tables, and not on the floor.

No ceremony was performed till 8 o'clock, A. M. Be-

<sup>1</sup> This is a most singular confession. "Our mother, we acknowledge that we have been guilty of breaking the rules of our *Holy Order*, by lifting our eyes while walking in the passage ways; in neglecting to take holy water on entering the Community and choir," &c. &c. It has the particularity of a special confession of faults, which, guilty or not, all, it seems, must make. According to Miss Reed, if a person raised her eyes or not in the passage ways, she must confess she did, and thus be placed in this dilemma. If she raised her eyes, she broke the rules; if she did not, she must lie in her confession!

fore that hour, breakfast was always despatched, the morning recreations terminated, and then the school exercises were commenced.

(Pages 83, 84 & 85.) Miss Reed's statements, with regard to the *ceremonies of table*, are furnished from her own inventive imagination. Our diet generally consisted, at dinner, of meat four times a week, with soup, vegetables and bread: on the other three days, we had fish and puddings. For breakfast, we had bread, with coffee, black tea, chocolate or shells: for supper, bread with butter or preserves, and some one of the liquids before mentioned.

If there ever was any mould on the bread, it was *by accident* that it was presented at the table. Miss Reed, being a person of feeble constitution, and not a member of the Community, had even delicacies which they had not.

(Page 86.) All in the Community are at liberty to converse on what subjects they please, provided they are *moral*. The division of the afternoon prayers, as stated by Miss Reed, is incorrect. We prayed from the quarter till half past one, and then recited *Vespers*, which terminated some minutes before two.

We had, at least, one hour's recreation every evening. A lay-sister did not "remain kneeling in the entry until we get to the psalm called the *Te Deum*," which is a *hymn*, not a *psalm*. No bell was rung while it was recited.

(Page 87.) "Matins, lauds and prayers," continued from 7 till 8 o'clock,—not till 9. The bell rang at half past 8, and all were in bed *before* 9. No one ever remained up to "attend lessons and penances." I do not recollect having reprimanded any one for not arranging my seat: it is hardly necessary to add, that I should not have reprimanded another for her "remissness." The apartment which she calls "the Bishop's room," was so named by the *young ladies*, because it was the room in which he generally entered first, when he came to perform divine service.

(Page 88.) I have no recollection of the circumstance of her saying she "liked all pretty well, except my couch;"

but if her "couch" was not agreeable to her, I doubt not it was changed at her request, without the intercession of any saint whatever.<sup>1</sup>

It is a fact, that Miss Reed never performed one penance, while in the Convent, and that, so far from having any "exhaustion," she improved very rapidly in her health. There were, consequently, no *austerities* from which it became necessary to release her. Mrs. Graham "(Mrs. G.)" and her whole family will testify, that she had improved wonderfully in her health while in the Convent.

No one in our Convent arose, during Lent, or at any other time, to say "Midnight Matins," and "hear Mass." We had Mass *one* Christmas night, but that was the only time.

(Page 91.) No such circumstance ever took place as the one related on this page, where she makes herself the companion of the Bishop and myself,—it is too ridiculous for credit with any one.<sup>2</sup>

There is not the slightest foundation in the story of Mrs. Mary Magdalene. For some months before her decease, she was not permitted to attend the public devotions of the Community, or even to kneel, in reciting her prayers. Had she been treated in the way that Miss Reed represents, would it be consistent that her two sisters, who were novices at the time, and at *full liberty* to leave, should nevertheless have united themselves to our Community for life,

1 At page 89, she says that the Bishop told her that her sister had been to see if she had taken the veil, or had any thought of taking it; and he said I might rest contented, as my friends would trouble me no more. She says her sisters say that he told them she had not taken the veil, but *hoped she would soon do it*. Notwithstanding this, she says, at p. 94, she was to take the veil *privately*, lest her father should hear of it, and take her away. Does it appear rational that the Bishop should have thus spoken to her sisters, if there was to be any thing *private* about it?

2 The total disconnectedness of her conversation with the Bishop, as stated by her on p. 88, will prove its falsity. "He, then, addressing me," says she, "asked how I liked Mount Benedict. I said, 'Very well, my Lord.' He then said, 'O, but you will have to strive with temptations between the good and evil spirits;' and he then explained all the horrors of Satan, and asked me where Saint Theresa, my namesake, was; and told me to say, as she did, these words, 'Now come, all of you; I, being a true servant of God, will see what you can do against me;' by way of challenge to the evil ones; and beg her intercession." The Bishop has some reputation, even with Miss Reed's publishing Committee, for intelligence and good sense, (p. 9): if this conversation took place, he ought not to retain that character a moment.



and are ready to testify as to the kind manner in which she was treated, as will also Dr. Thompson, who attended her?

(Page 94.<sup>1</sup>) No preparations could have been made for her taking the *vows*, as she here asserts, as we had no intention of receiving her as a member of our Community, and she was well acquainted with this determination.<sup>2</sup>

The poetry which she speaks of, was composed for her by Mrs. Mary Austin: she, herself, could not pen, correctly, two lines of prose or poetry.

(Page 95.) The idea, that her conversion was "like St. Teresa's," never struck me; nor can I, even since she has mentioned it, imagine where the similarity lies.

I am surprised that she speaks of *ten* dresses, and I am sorry to be compelled to say, that she only had two that could with decency be worn;—the pongee, which was given to her before she entered, in order that she might have the uniform of the pupils, and a brown dress.<sup>3</sup> She sent, a long time after she left, for two silk gowns; and in order to exonerate the

1 It may be well here to allude to the charge of Miss Reed, that she was not at liberty to write to, or to receive her friends. The fact was, having stated repeatedly that her friends had treated her unkindly, and cast her off, and admitting in her book, (p 62,) that her father had given her the option of renouncing "all connection with the Catholics," or leave her friends—she had adopted the former alternative; and she was compelled, as she thought, for consistency's sake, to renounce them in turn. She absolutely refused to see them when they called, as she also did afterwards, at Mrs. Graham's, before she decided whether to return to them or get admitted, if possible, to the orders of the Sisters of Charity. Her message to her friends, at p. 93, informs them that "I liked the Convent very well, and should be very happy to see them, *if they would not speak against my religion.*" Does she doubt that she could see them, if she would? and, knowing their sentiments, does it appear unlikely, that, on the whole, she should refuse to see them? Her message, she says, was never received; and she then asserts, that she was deceived in regard to Mrs. Graham's friendship. She says this to get rid of the effect of Mrs. Graham's contradiction, who, if she is not her friend, is too honest to deceive or to lie. And she says, that the messages were delivered to her friends, and that she refused to see her own sister, after she had left the Convent, and secreted herself when she called. Mrs. G. was shocked at such unfeeling conduct, invited her sister in, and told Miss Reed that she must see her sister, who had come all the way from the City for this purpose.

2 She says the vows were administered to her "privately," for fear her father should hear of it, &c. As the ceremony is always made known, Miss Reed knew, unless she could make this appear to have been an exception, the children would all have contradicted her statement. It is therefore represented private, in order to avoid this exposure.

3 The clothes she had at Mrs. Graham's, before entering the Convent, were hardly decent. Mrs. G. and her friends gave her some. When she left her father's, she was destitute.

Institution from having defrauded her of rightful property, it may be well to mention here, that, at the time we were expecting the Cholera, and while, of course, we were making all due exertion to free the habitation of every thing that might cause impure air, necessity forced us to commit them to the flames. As to the story of the "long habit" and "veil," there is not a *shadow* of truth in it; the scholars know this story to be false.

(Page 96.) The ridiculous story of her not rising at the Angelus, and its being unnoticed, and a nun omitting the same duties, and being penanced for the omission, narrated on this page, has no more truth in it than the preceding one of the "long habit" and "veil."<sup>1</sup>

(Pages 97 and 98.) The contents of these pages are incorrect. The good sister who is here spoken of, had too superior a mind to act as Miss Reed describes in these and some of the following pages. However, there was some foundation, on which the fertile imagination of Miss Reed could seize, in order to produce the interesting details of these pages.

Mrs. Mary Francis had passed some time, in the course of her education, with the Sisters of Charity. After making a trial of our order, she said she thought theirs would better suit her inclinations than ours. She was advised to remain some time longer with us; there being, however, no intention, or supposition, that such an arrangement would interfere with her happiness. She said, very readily, that she could take three months to decide. She was a person very easily affected to tears; and in this state of indecision, they could not be restrained. When I saw that her mind was thus troubled, I thought it best that she should come to an imme-

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<sup>1</sup> Supposing the story to be true, however, it only proves the assertion, that she was not one of the "*Religieuse*." She states frequent omissions of duty, which were unnoticed in her case, and yet punished by penance or reproof in the cases of others, thus drawing the distinction that existed between her and the "*Religieuse*." Her frequent compliments to herself upon her singing and working, as that upon p. 76, put into the mouth of the Bishop, are slight evidence of her *retiring modesty of character*.

diate determination. She did so ; and, concluding to embrace the life of a Sister of Charity, she left Mount Benedict, in the beginning of November, 1831, instead of waiting till Christmas, as she had at first intended.<sup>1</sup>

(Page 98.) Miss Reed was indisposed *once*, while at Mt. Benedict, from a disordered stomach, which occasioned faintness: she took an emetic, after which she seemed to be perfectly well. It is singular, that when, as she says, she had actually fainted, she could hear me whisper, and say to her, she “ought not to have any feelings.”

(Page 101.) Had we felt inclined to use such cruelty as to confine Mrs. Mary Francis, the Selectmen of Charlestown, as well as the public at large, who have had ample opportunity of examining the Convent since its destruction, will be able to assert, whether or not we had places suitable for executing so shocking a design. We were put to much inconvenience, on account of having only one *very small* cellar, on the south side of the building; in consequence of which, we had not a proper place to secure our vegetables.<sup>2</sup>

1 Her course of proceeding, as it regards Mrs. Mary Francis, is a very fair specimen of the duplicity of Miss Reed's character, taking her own account. It shows that, even if what she relates be true, as it certainly is not, her *forte* is *duplicity*, — writing on a slate, and *pretending* to write music, — laying a plot to deceive the Lady Superior, — telling a lie by concert with another, — selecting the letters of her real name from a book, when they were in conversation, and it might have been spoken or written, — all these tricks, if they were not actually played, yet Miss Reed has shown her fondness for them by the fabrication. She says, she has received letters from Mrs. Mary Francis, since her departure from the Convent. I know she has written to her, and she admits the receipt of letters from her. I call upon her for their production, and desire exceedingly to have that correspondence brought before the public. Mrs. Mary Francis, or Miss Kennedy, is a Catholic, and her testimony would be very strong against us. If Miss Reed and she were so intimate, and if the events occurred, as stated by Miss R., there will be no difficulty in having it confirmed by letters written at the time, and before Catholic influence can be pretended to have originated their production. I have been told by those who have seen the letters, that the first is an answer to Miss Reed's request to be admitted to the Sisterhood of which Mrs. Mary Francis was a member. Miss Reed deceived Mrs. Mary Francis, by telling her that she had not left the Convent, but thought of it (in fact she had actually left it), and wished to have her advice upon the proposed *change*. The answer has been seen by several persons. The Ursuline Community want no better proof of the falsehood of Miss Reed, than this letter. She admits that she has received three letters from Mrs. Mary Francis: the public, I doubt not, will agree with me as to the importance of producing them.

2 Miss Reed has asserted to her friends, that Mrs. Mary Francis “was secretly confin-

Mrs. Mary Magdalene sewed when she felt an inclination to do so, as it was an amusement for her to be occasionally employed in something of the kind; but that she was compelled to labor in any way is totally false.

We did not know, till some months since, that Miss Reed ever had any pretensions to the name of *Mary Agnes*. She was known, at Mount Benedict, by the appellation of *Miss Reed*. She never wrote a letter to her father or to any of her friends while with us,<sup>1</sup> as near as I can recollect.

Pages 102, 103 and 104, are not true. I should be pleased to be informed by Miss Reed, where the "Meditation Garden" was situated, for we knew of no such place. The stories respecting Mary Magdalene, on page 104, are too inhuman, it would be supposed, to be believed by any one; they are absolutely false.<sup>2</sup>

Page 105 is entirely false; and the note in which she says Mary Magdalene entered the Convent nine months before in perfect health, asserts a fact of which Miss Reed could know nothing. Before Mrs. Mary Magdalene left Ireland, she was pronounced to be consumptive; and though she died *more than one year*, not *nine months*, after she entered the Convent, it was not in consequence of being "worn out with austerities." This has already been publicly stated by Dr. Thompson.

ed or made way with," and one person, to whom she told the story, happened to know of these letters she now admits having received, and asked her how it could be. Her ready reply was, that the letters were *forged*!!

1 She could not write as legibly as common children of ten years of age, and her publishers will hardly certify more favorably of her present chirography.

2 "Two or three days after this," says Miss R., "I met Miss Mary Francis at my lessons, in the Community, and again asked her to tell me her distress, or I would tell the Superior I could not learn of her." Why write it on a slate? as she states they were conversing together. Because Miss Reed could never do or say any thing, in a simple and straightforward way. She threatens Mrs. Mary F., if she will not tell her what the matter is, she will tell a lie to the Superior, about her inability to learn of her. She finally tells Mrs. Mary F., that if she will tell her the cause of her troubles, she will not inform the Superior, and upon this promise obtains her confidence. On p. 140, we find that she betrays her to the Bishop.

Pages 106, 107, and 108, depict Miss Reed's talent in the art of dissimulation; and it is quite natural that a person of her description should wish to implicate others with herself.

We did not know, while Miss Reed was with us, that she experienced any soreness on her lungs.<sup>1</sup>

(Page 109.) The falsity and absurdity of this page can easily be detected by any one who will take the trouble to read it.

(Page 110.) Should a candidate, after a trial of three months, prefer not remaining in our order, she is returned to her parents or friends, and not placed in another Convent.

(Page 111.) Mrs. Mary Angela left the Institution in the most honorable manner, after residing with us four years.<sup>2</sup>

(Page 118.) Miss Reed never expressed any wish to see her friends; but, on the contrary, when the subject was proposed to her, she always rejected it immediately. She called her relations wicked, and said that her brother P. and Mr. E. declared the Convent should come down; but that it had been her mother's dying request, that *she* should endeavor to be received there.

(Pages 120 and 121.) The details of these pages might be imagined and executed by the narrator, but by few others.

"I began," she says, "to be much dissatisfied with the Convent. My views of retirement, however, were the same as ever, and I thought I would go to the Sisters of Charity, where Miss Mary Francis was educated, as she had promised to introduce me there. She told me that I should be called to the public apartments (as an assistant in ornamental

<sup>1</sup> The following amusing sentence occurs on pp. 108, 109. "She," the Superior, "observed that I looked melancholy, and commanded me to tell her the reason. I replied that I did not feel well, that my lungs were sore, since taking the emetic, &c. She said that was only a notion, and bade me tell the *true reason*, without any equivocation. My words were, I did not like her so well as formerly. She exclaimed, 'O, my child, I admire you for your simplicity,' and asked me the reason for not loving her, which I declined giving." Admirable girl, delightful simplicity!! Here the simplicity consists in a practical illustration of the lie direct and lie circumstantial.

<sup>2</sup> See her letters in the Appendix.

work).” This sentence shows how definite her views of retirement were. She wanted to go to the Sisters of Charity, to work in the *public apartment*, open to every person who chose to call. This, I candidly believe, is the only kind of retirement Miss Reed ever desired.

On page 121, she relates a plot, laid by her, to deceive me, by which Mrs. Mary Francis was to get released from the Convent, as follows:—“Miss Mary F. was to complain to the Superior that I would not give proper attention when at my lessons, and I was to tell her that I could not receive any benefit from Miss Mary F. on account of her grief and absence of mind. This we fulfilled to the letter. We also agreed on a signal, by which I should know whether she was going with or without permission. If she went without permission, she was to tie a string round an old book, as if to keep the leaves together, and lay it on the writing-desk; if with permission, she was to make the sign of the cross three times upon her lips.” They then prayed to God to forgive them this deceit. After the prayer, Miss Mary F. “selected from a book the letters forming her real name, that I might write to her in case I could not get an opportunity to give a letter to Miss I.”

This string of absurdities is remarkable. Miss Reed never saw Mrs. Mary F. again,—the *plot*, she would have it thought, succeeded. But what the plot has to do with Mrs. Mary F.’s leaving the Convent, is beyond conjecture. Then as to the signal—one would suppose she could speak as well as to make the sign of the cross. If these do not show artifice and deceit without motive, nothing can. Then, again, why should Mrs. Mary F. take so much trouble to make known her name: it would have been much more expeditious, as well as convenient, to write it, or tell it; but it would not have answered the views of the narrator to take so simple and plain a method to accomplish her object.

(Page 123.) Miss Reed here comes to taking the vows. She never took any vows. No one, that is not lost to every

principle of religion and truth, will dare affirm it. Thankful to Heaven I am, that no vows of this lying girl were ever uttered, to my knowledge, while she resided with us. Had she taken it, would not the scholars have known it? She is even ignorant now as to what the vows are. She talks of *white* and *black* vows,—there are no such vows known. They are names of her own adoption.

(Page 125.) Mrs. Mary Magdalene had not a lock of her mother's hair, nor was she directed to burn all her treasures."<sup>1</sup>

The story of her falling prostrate, &c., is of course *false*, as well as the one on page 126, about preparing her a place in the tomb: except for the inhumanity of the act, they would have been too ridiculous for denial.

(Page 126.) She made no objection, as she states, to pursue her music. She came, as she was advised by Rev. Mr. Croswell, to be instructed, in order to become a teacher on her own account, but tried very hard to be allowed to join our Institution.

(Page 127.) I insert this page for the advantage of those who, by any chance, may not have read Miss Reed's book; to comment upon it, is useless. If this story be true, we not only imposed upon others, but allowed ourselves to be imposed upon.

"On one of the holy days, the Bishop came in, and, *after playing on his flute*, addressed the Superior, *styling her Mademoiselle*, and wished to know if Mary Magdalene wished to go to her long home. The Superior beckoned her to come to them, and she approached on her knees. The Bishop asked her if she felt prepared to die. She replied, 'Yes, my Lord; but, with the permission of our mother, I have one request to make.' She said she wished to be anointed before death, if his Lordship thought her worthy of so great a favor. He said, 'Before I grant your request, I have one to make;

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<sup>1</sup> Her treasures, she says, "consisted of written prayers, books, papers, a lock of her mother's hair," &c. On page 142, she says, "A few days after the death of Mary Magdalene, her desk was brought forward, that the Superior might examine it, and distribute its contents to those she thought most worthy," and that she did distribute them accordingly.

and that is, that you will implore the Almighty to send down from Heaven a bushel of gold, for the purpose of establishing a college for young men on Bunker's Hill." She then goes on to state, that the Bishop told the members to think of what they liked best, and upon being asked to name what she desired most, Miss R. replied, "I then said, I lacked humility, and should wish for that virtue." Artless, unaffected creature! How well this request comes from the plotting eavesdropper, that she represents herself to be! I am sorry to say, however much she needs humility, she never made the request for an increase of it. The whole story is the fertile but natural offspring of her brain.

(Page 130.) Mrs. Mary Magdalene took the vows before she died, at her own *repeated* and *earnest* solicitation, as she thought it would be a great consolation to her, and contribute much to her happiness and peace of mind.

Many young ladies have been present when the vows were taken by the inmates of the Community, and they can certify that no coffin was ever used on those occasions.<sup>1</sup>

(Page 133.) Miss Reed says, "She" (the Superior) "frequently called me her *holy innocent*, because she said I kept the rules of the order, and was persevering in my vocation as a *Recluse*." It is utterly untrue, that I ever used such an expression towards her. I had, ere this, discovered her to be a foolish, romantic girl, and felt no interest in her; but Miss R. is fond of appropriating praise to herself, and I should not have remarked upon the sentence, if she had not placed a reason in my mouth for calling her *my holy innocent*, as false as the expression itself. She admits, in various passages of her book, that she failed in observing the rules, and one occurs on the very page preceding; and as to her perseverance in her vocation as a *Recluse*, she was not one.

On the same page, she says she asked for a Bible once or twice, but that she never saw one while there. This is a falsehood, made to suit the vulgar notion, that Catholics are

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<sup>1</sup> The ceremony of taking the vows has always been one of the few ceremonies that were public; and parents have frequently attended, with their children, this ceremony.



not allowed to read the Bible. Every scholar in our school was required to bring a Bible ; the number belonging to our Community was considerable, and they were all within her reach. It was unnecessary even to ask for one.

(Page 135.) I was at the bedside of Mrs. Mary Magdalene, during her last moments, had hold of her hand, and closed her eyes. I told her, if she was sensible, to press my hand, as she could not speak ; and she did so. No lighted wax taper was placed in her hand.

(Page 135.) From this page to page 139, Miss Reed occupies herself with the death and burial of our much-deplored sister Mary Magdalene. I am charged with inhumanity towards her while living, and with indifference to her memory. If cruel to her while living, it must have been from a love of beholding bodily pain and suffering in others, for it certainly could not have operated favorably on the minds of her natural sisters and the Community generally, thus to expose my unfeeling disposition ; the more especially before Miss Reed, if she flatters herself that I had a wish to retain her, or to induce her to become a member of the Community. Her whole description of the death and funeral is, of course, written from memory, after a considerable lapse of time ; and I should not be surprised to find trifling errors, even if she had written with the best intentions ; but the whole narration is so inaccurate, that I cannot but believe she had no intention or wish, even in this case, to be accurate. She says, for instance, on page 138, "After depositing the coffin in the tomb, the clergy retired to dinner." The truth is, that the coffin was deposited in the tomb at eight o'clock in the morning.

Page 139 consists of insinuations against the Bishop, charging him with asking her "improper questions," the meaning of which she "did not then understand." Of this, I can, of course, know nothing, and they must pass for true or false, as her character for truth, and the probability of her stories, may stand against his denial.

(Pages 140, 141.) She here confesses to the Bishop, that she did not like me, and expressed her determination to

leave the order ; *in consequence of which*, he gave her a *penance to perform*, which she performs, because she is desirous of being thought obedient. Her "motive was prudence, not want of courage !" Neither of these virtues was requisite : a little honesty, on her part, would have saved us the pain of dismissing her—and her, the disgrace which she attempted to avoid by running away.

(Page 142.) Had such a remark been made by any one in the Community, that "she hoped there was not another *Judas* among them," it would have been very appropriate ; and it is quite natural, that Miss Reed should have found it difficult "to betray no emotion ;" but we had so little idea of the double part which she was acting, that, the evening on which she eloped, we felt rejoiced, that she had spared us the *painful necessity* of forcing her to leave at the expiration of the six months. When we found there was no doubt that she had left the Convent, I said to my sisters, "She is disappointed at not being allowed to take the veil ; but how *grateful* she will always be to you for every little mark of kindness that you have so often manifested towards her !"

The "balls of a darkish color," I imagine, must have consisted of minced meat, fried in butter, the taste of which must have assumed a strange alteration when placed upon *her* plate.<sup>1</sup>

(Page 143.) "Some days after this," says Miss Reed, "the Superior sent for me to practise music, and then made a signal for me to follow her to the Bishop's room. This room is separated from the others by shutters, with curtains drawing on the chapel side. When I had kissed her feet, she desired to know why I had cried at practice in the choir. I rather *imprudently* answered, I could not tell—I did not cry

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<sup>1</sup> The following is the sentence of Miss Reed, alluded to, and is a fair specimen of her peculiar method of writing and thinking :—"The next time we met at recreation, one of them remarked, she hoped there was not another *Judas* among them. I endeavored to betray no emotion, but they still mistrusted I had other views ; for, while sitting at my diet, in the refectory, I observed my food was of a kind that I had never seen before ;" that is,—I know that they mistrusted me, and thought I had other views—because, while sitting at my diet, in the refectory, I observed my food was of a kind that I had never seen before. This is what the Committee of Publication term "a plain, simple, and unaffected style."

much. (It then struck me she could not have seen me, as I was alone.) *I said I was very cold*, particularly my feet ; and *I had been practising ‘Blue-eyed Mary,’ and was affected by the words.*” Having read this, I need hardly ask the reader to disbelieve the rest of her statement, in which she finally admits the falsity of the above reasons. She says, “*I imprudently answered I could not tell,*” &c. ; that is, she spoke a falsehood so hastily as to be *imprudent*, for, if she had only thought that I could not see her, she might have answered, ‘*I did not cry.*’ Having *imprudently* confessed it, however, she readily accounted for her tears by two more lies — downright, admitted lies.

(Page 146.) When her sister, with Miss F. called to see her, one Sabbath afternoon, I told her she could do as she pleased, and that she was perfectly free to see them that afternoon, though it was Sunday, but she refused. I told her that they sent word to know if she could attend her sister M’s wedding. She said, that was only a pretext which they had taken in order to deceive me, as her sister had been married the preceding month. She behaved at the Convent towards her friends, precisely as I have since learned she behaved towards them, while living with her friend Mrs. G.

(Page 149.) She says she determined to leave the Convent and then proceeds, “*I had reason to think that my letters were never sent to my friends and determined to convey one privately. I stole a few moments and hastily wrote some lines with my pencil, and hid them behind the altar, but the billet was discovered, and I never heard from it.*” I imagine that even Miss R’s imagination, though fertile enough to place the billet behind the altar, can give no reason why it was placed there. Did she expect that it would be taken by some spirit of the air, or inhabitant of the earth, to its place of destination, by placing it behind the altar ?

(Page 150.) Stating it was her turn to be “*lecturess,*” that is to read aloud, which she never did, she says, “*a book was placed before me in the Refectory, called ‘Rules of St. Augustine’ and the place marked to read was concerning a*

Religieuse receiving letters clandestinely. I could not control my feelings, for what I read was *very affecting*." The rules of Saint Augustine are annexed to this answer, and it is sufficient to refer the reader to them ; the affecting passage referred to by Miss Reed will not, I fear, be found to repay the search.

(Page 152.) We had no porters and dogs to watch the gate of the Convent, which was always left unguarded, as every one who came to Mt. Benedict, must have observed.

(Page 153.) "A letter was read to the Community that was addressed to the Superior, from Bishop P. of Emmetsburg. There was no Bishop P. of Emmetsburg, and the whole story in relation to my giving it to her to read is of course, fabulous.

(Pages 155 and 156,) are remarkable only for the acknowledgements of the petty tricks, which seem so familiar to her. First, "pretending not to hear," when called to the examination, and second, answering questions with "*seeming ignorance*." This is the "singleness of heart" attributed to her by the Committee of publication.

Pages 157 and 158, are *false*. The stories are rather too marvellous for any practical inferences, though to be drawn by Miss Reed.

Page 160. No pupils were ever punished "for refusing to say prayers to the Saints, and to read Roman Catholic history" — 300 children can testify upon this subject against the statement of Miss Reed. Upon the treatment of the scholars, I beg leave to refer to the parents of the children, who have been placed under our charge.

(Page 161.) As a specimen of Miss Reed's "*artless and unaffected piety*," we extract the following : "After this, the Superior was sick of the influenza, and I did not see her for two or three days. I attended to my offices as usual, such as preparing the wine and the water, the chalice, host, holy water and vestments, &c. One day, however, I had forgotten to attend to this duty at the appointed hour, but recollecting it, and fearing lest I should offend the Superior, by reason of

negligence, I asked permission to leave the room, telling a novice *that our mother had given me leave to attend to it*. She answered, O yes, Sister, you can go then." Now this lie was told, admitted by Miss Reed in her book to be a lie, and yet she claims to be believed. She hesitated not an instant, and it comes from her as readily as the truth would from the lips of ingenuousness. Does the Rev. Mr. Croswell, who has read her book very carefully, believe her to be a girl of truth and veracity?

(Page 162.) Miss Reed appeared to be much affected at the idea of leaving us, and asked if I could not get her into some other Convent. I told her not to let her mind be thus tormented, and that I would see if any thing could be done to effect her wishes ; but observed that she still had more than two months to continue with us. This, I thought, was a great consolation to her, as she expressed *very great* reluctance to leave the Convent. I told the Rt. Rev. Bishop of the desire which she had, and asked him if he could not persuade some community to take her.<sup>1</sup> This is the conversation which she overheard, and from which she has drawn the singular conclusion, that we intended to *entice* her into a carriage, to get her to Canada *in three days*, and to confine her in a Convent, lest she should *report something injurious to our community*.

Of the account of Miss Reed respecting the conversation between me and the Bishop, I can only say that I am deceived as to the degree of intelligence her readers possess, if it be believed. In the first place, supposing us to be so ignorant and stupid as to imagine that we could carry Miss Reed to Canada against her will, without discovery of it to the world, it cannot be believed for a moment, that we could rid the community of her and confine her in Canada, without exposing ourselves to certain conviction and punishment by the means of her friends, who knew she was with us, and who could have at

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<sup>1</sup> Her letters to Miss Kennedy will show that such was her pretended desire, even after she left the Convent.

any time compelled us to produce her. In order, however, to give probability to this tale, she relates a story still more improbable, and in a manner, which proves its improbability in the highest degree.

The following is the account of a course of proceeding by which Miss R. was to be forced into a carriage and carried to Canada: "A few days after, while at my needle in the refectory, I heard a carriage drive to the door of the Convent, and heard a person step into the Superior's room. Immediately the Superior passed *lightly* along the passage which led to the back entry, where the men servants or porters were employed, and reprimanded them *in a loud tone for something* they were doing." (She heard the light step along the passage, and yet she does not undertake to say what the men were doing, or what the reprimand was about, although the most trifling fact seems important enough to put in the story.) "She then opened the door of the refectory, and *seemed indifferent*<sup>1</sup> about entering; but at length seated herself beside me, and began conversation, by saying, 'Well, my dear girl, what do you think of going to see your friends?' I said, (with all due caution,) 'what friends, Mamere?' said she, 'You would like to see your friends Mrs. G. and Father B., (Mrs. Graham and Father Byrne, probably,) and talk with them respecting your call to another order. Before I had time to answer, she commanded me to take off *my garb*,' (she wore a common female dress, all the time, she was in the Convent, and a modest cap on her head,) "telling me she was in haste, and that a carriage was waiting to convey me to my friends." (Thus from entering with *seeming indifference*, I proceeded with *indecent haste* to urge her to a carriage, which was already waiting for her, to carry her away. Think of the probabilities, reader. I am ready to trust my reputation on the evident improbability of the story thus far, which, if true, shows me to be a *fool* as well as a *knave*.) "I answered, with as cheerful a countenance as I could assume, 'O, Mamere, I am sorry to give you so much

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1 "Seemed indifferent," one of her acknowledged favorite modes of deceit.

trouble ; I had rather see them here first.' While conversing, I heard a little bell ring several times. The Superior said, 'Well, my dear, make up your mind ; the bell calls me to the parlor.' " (Thus rapidly does my haste cool down, leaving her alone to reflect on the subject.) " She soon returned, and asked if I had made up my mind to go, I answered, 'No, Mamere.' She then said, I had failed in obedience to her," (*obedience* is one of the few rules she adverts to and remembers, probably, from the reason of her numerous admitted infractions of it,) " and as I had so often talked of going to another order with such a person as Mary Francis, I had better go immediately ; and again she said, *raising her voice*," (why raising her voice?) " You have failed in respect to your Superior. You must recollect I am a lady of *quality*, brought up in opulence, and accustomed to all the luxuries of life." (What my opulence or luxury had to do with her obedience, Miss Reed only knows.) " I told her I was very sorry *to have listened* to any thing wrong against her dignity." (She does not say that she had, or was charged with *having listened* to any thing wrong against my dignity.) " She commanded me to kneel, which I did ; and if tears were ever a relief to me, they were then. She *stamped* on the floor *violently*, and asked, if I was innocent, why I did not go to communion. I told her that I felt unworthy to go to communion at that time." (In a note, she gives as a reason why she was unworthy of communion, that her eyes were opened, that she had been in error, and found herself too enthusiastic in her first views of a Convent life, and that she "was using some deception towards the Superior and the Religieuse, in order to effect an escape." Yet, strange to say, she no where says that she asked permission to quit the Convent, but left it, as she has other places, clandestinely. But to proceed.) " The bell again rung, and she left the room, and in a few moments returning, desired me to tell her immediately, what I thought of doing, for, as she had promised to protect me forever, she must know my mind." (Why I must know her mind for that reason, even supposing it to be true, I cannot

conceive.) "She then mentioned the carriage was still in waiting." (It would have helped readers, if she had informed them, how long space of time this drama was acting.) "I still declined going, for I was convinced their object was not to carry me to Mrs. G. and Priest B. to consult about another order, but directly to Canada. I told her I had concluded to ask my confessor's advice, and meditate on it some longer. She rather *emphatically* said, 'You can meditate on it if you please, and do as you like about going to see your friends.' " (Why there should be any cause for emphasis, ~~none~~ but the artless Miss R. I fear, can tell. As to the reply that she had concluded to ask her confessor's advice, this must be admitted by her Committee, and by her pastor, to be a ready or premeditated lie, as her eyes were then opened to the sins of our order, and to the faithlessness of her confessor, p. 162. What lies are excusable in their sight, the book does not inform us, nor how far they go to show artlessness of character, in her that tells them.) "She said that my sister had been there, and did not wish to see me. Our conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of a novice. The Superior then gave me my choice, either to remain on Mt. Benedict, or go to some other order," (that is all she wanted, one would suppose, from her having written to Mrs. Mary Francis, after leaving the Convent, for this purpose,) "and by next week to make up my mind, as it *remained with me to decide.*" (Knowing that she was not to remain much longer, and dreading the ridicule that would be attached to her for being sent from the Convent, she carefully puts forward on every occasion, that she was to go or stay, as she pleased, and that the latter alternative was our most ardent wish.) "She then gave me a heavy penance to perform," (probably to induce her to stay,) "which was, instead of going to the choir, as usual, at the ringing of the bell, to go to the mangle room and repeat *Ave Marias* while turning the mangle. While performing my penance, Sister Martha left the room, and soon returning, said she had orders to release me from my penance, and to direct me to finish my meditations on the pis-



ture of a saint, which she gave me. But instead of saying the prayers that I was bidden, I fervently prayed to be delivered from their wicked hands." (She was bidden to finish *her meditations* on the picture of a saint, but instead of saying the prayers she was bidden, she fervently prayed to be delivered, &c. The connectedness of her thoughts here as elsewhere, shows the reliance to be placed upon her memory.)

I have gone through these pages with greater care, than the same labor would repay upon most of the book, because it charges a most wicked crime upon me, that of conspiring to send her forcibly away and of restraining her liberty by violence. If I conspired to do it, why did I not carry it into effect? It would seem I had every thing prepared, and nothing was wanting but to get her to the carriage. If I had the wickedness and hardihood to proceed thus far, I might, one would have supposed, have proceeded this one step further. Instead of doing so however, I gave her the choice, as she says, to remain or go to any other Convent, as she pleased. The conclusion of this most important affair would form a proper moral to any tale, where great means are employed to accomplish no end. The conclusion of her *important* affair results in her having every thing as she wished.

(Page 170.) "They appeared much pleased with my *supposed* reformation, and I think they believed me sincere." How well the artless creature must have performed the hypocrite to have deceived us all, under such "trying circumstances!"

(Page 172.) I will not notice her precious recollections recorded on the next pages, but proceed at once to that eventful period, when Miss Reed made her escape. "Some days after the conversation which I heard between the Bishop and Superior, while behind the altar, I was in the refectory at my work," ("Some days after," — is not a very accurate mode of fixing a date to so memorable an event. At p. 165 she says, they were very desirous that week to know if my feelings were changed." At p. 166, she says, "for some days I was not well" and on the same page, she relates the story of the

carriage, as occurring "a few days after," that event; some time must have elapsed, between that time, and when on p. 170, she says "they appeared pleased with my reformation;" it was after this that "the Bishop visited the Convent on the next holy day," all these days occurred after the supposed conversation between the Bishop and the Superior, and before her departure. I mention this to show her want of accuracy, so important in works of fact, and not of fiction) "and heard the noise of the porters who were employed sawing wood, and I conjectured the gate might be open for them. (Every body knows, that has ever visited the Convent, that the gates were always unlocked, and most usually wide open.) "I thought it a good opportunity to escape, which I contemplated in this manner, viz: to ask permission to leave the room, and as I passed the entry, to *secrete* about my habit a hood which hung there, that would help to *conceal* a part of my *garb* from particular observation; then to *feign* an errand to the infirmarian from the Superior, as I imagined I could escape from the door of the infirmary." (Artless creature! to steal a hood, to conceal her garb, — that is, to cover her head, — to feign an errand to the infirmarian, and then to run away! affecting artlessness of character!!!!) "This plan formed, and just as I was going, I heard a band of music, playing as it seemed, in front of the Convent." (This does not seem probable, as it was in mid-winter, and our residence was removed from the street, but it might have been so, though I recollect no such occurrence.) "I heard the young ladies assembling in the parlor, and the porters left their work, as I supposed, for the noise of the saws ceased. I felt quite revived, and was more confident I should be able to escape without detection, even if it should be necessary to get over the fence. I *feigned* an errand, and asked permission of Miss Mary Austin to leave the room, which she granted. I succeeded in secreting" (stealing is it not?) "the hood and the book in which Miss Mary Francis had left her address, and then knocked at the door three times which led to the lay apartments. A person came to the door, who ap-

peared in great distress.” (Here follows a note about a *domestic*, who appeared very unhappy. I shall advert to this subject presently.)<sup>1</sup>

“I asked her where sister Bennett and sister Bernard were: she left me to find them. I gave the infirmarian to understand that the Superior wished to see her, and I desired her to go immediately to her room.” Here, reader, let us pause a moment. If I had charged any one with telling so many falsehoods in a breath, it would have appeared incredible; and yet she states them with apparent triumph. Shame it is upon my sex, that such a one can be found to disgrace it. But to proceed. “These gone, I unlocked and passed out of the back door, and as the gate *appeared* shut, I climbed upon the *slats* which confined the grape-vines to the fence; but these gave way, and, falling to the ground, I sprained my wrist. I then thought I would try the gate, which I found unfastened, and as there was no one near it” (neither dogs or men), “I ran through, and hurried to the next house. In getting over the fences, between the Convent and this house, I fell, and hurt myself badly.” Miss Reed affords by this account another proof that her imagination is her worst enemy. Nothing turns out so badly as she imagines. She imagines a carriage to come for her to carry her into Canada, yet she was not carried there: she imagined our gates to be locked, yet they were not: she imagined the premises to be guarded by dogs and men, and yet she saw none: she runs away, merely because she chose to run—walking would have answered the purpose equally as well. A striking instance is here afforded of her disposition to avoid a straight-forward course, if possible. She goes into the garden—the gate leading out of it *appeared shut*: she did not examine, to see, but takes the unnecessary labor of climbing the grapery, in order to make her escape *marvellous*; but finding she could not get over the fence, she was compelled to go out in the unromantic

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<sup>1</sup> This case is particularly mentioned in the prefatory remarks, and will be publicly authenticated in a collection of testimony now in preparation.

way she mentioned — by the gate. She found, after leaving our premises, other fences to clamber over (rail-fences, we presume), and contrived to make up the perils of her wanderings there. Our Community and the children of the school, on the night of the destruction of our property, passed over the same ground without sprains or bruises.

At page 173, Miss Reed speaks of a person who came to the door, appearing to be in great distress, and, in the note, she says — “This was Sarah S., a domestic, who appeared very unhappy while I was in the Convent. I often saw her in tears, and learned from the Superior that she was *sighing* for the *veil*. When I saw my brother, I informed him of this circumstance, and he soon found who she was, and ascertained that some ladies in Cambridge had been to see the Superior, who used to them pretty much the same language she did to my sister. I have since seen her. She is still under the influence of the Roman Church” (that is to say, she will flatly contradict Miss Reed), “but assures me that she did not refuse to see the ladies, as the Superior had represented to them, and she wept because of ill health, &c.”

As this story, as well as many others told so flippantly, — artlessly, the Committee would say, — will be disproved in a more extended form, and placed in an unequivocal light before the public in a short time, I will merely state that the domestic above alluded to formerly lived with highly respectable *Protestant* ladies in Cambridge, and came from them to live with us in the capacity of domestic, and left us, as other domestics always have, honorably. Soon after Miss Reed left the Convent, she called upon one of these ladies, and informed her that she came to tell her that Sarah S. was at the Convent, and was treated very ill, and could not get away. The lady, from causes already mentioned,<sup>1</sup> did not put much credit in the statements of Miss Reed. Some time after, Sarah S. called upon the lady, who told her what Miss Reed had said. She replied that it was wholly untrue — that

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<sup>1</sup> See *Preliminary Remarks*.

she liked the place very well, but that she got tired of its sameness and seclusion, and concluded to come away ; and having given notice to the Superior of the fact, she settled with her and left.

I have now done with Miss Reed for the present ; but this hasty denial of her falsehoods will not conclude the exposure of her character and conduct. I shall proceed in the investigation of the subject, and the results shall, from time to time, be made known to the public. For one as young as she is, she has accomplished much, and the witnesses of her doings are not few. Nor will it be Catholic testimony or influence alone that is to place her and her advisers in their true light. The cause of truth will raise me advocates and testimonials, and those who would have shrunk from coming forward, a few days ago, to tell what they know of Miss Reed, will now be impelled to do so, from the highest and purest motives.

I am aware that Miss Reed has a host of friends and believers, who will rally around her, and endeavor to support her. Having been deceived thus far, they will feel ashamed to be convinced of their folly and blindness. But there are many, who have read her book with honest intentions, without carefully examining its statements, and who honestly believe it to be true, whose minds are nevertheless open to a conviction of its falsity. To such our remarks are directed, and to them we confidently submit this *Answer*.

SR. MARY EDMOND ST. GEORGE.

WE, the undersigned, do hereby declare our assent to and belief in the statements of the Lady Superior, as above made, so far as our personal knowledge extends to the facts stated.

SR. MARY JOHN IGNATIUS,  
SR. MARY BENEDICT JOSEPH.



## A P P E N D I X .

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The following testimony is offered to the perusal of the candid reader, with the belief that, as it comes from Protestants, it may be believed.

*The letters that follow are printed from Mr. Fay's Argument before the Legislative Committee, and were never seen by the members of the Ursuline Community, until they appeared in print.*

In compliance with a request from the Committee of Investigation of citizens of Boston, and as a tribute to truth and justice, I certify, that, for two years and a half prior to the destruction of the Convent in Charlestown in August last, I had under my charge a young lady from the South, who was prosecuting her education at that seminary. From all that I observed in frequent visits, and learnt in conversation with my ward, I fully believe, that the highly-respectable Superior and Sisters of the Ursuline Community excelled in attention to the health and manners of the pupils, were uniformly kind, and unceasingly devoted to their moral and intellectual improvement, and inculcated upon their minds, both by precept and example, the virtues which are peculiar ornaments of the female character.

No reserve or secrecy were ever enjoined or expected from the pupils; nor had I ever the least suspicion, that the Ladies of the Community had any thing which they could wish to conceal.

Among the pupils were children of both Protestant and Catholic parents. But I never had the least reason to suspect, that any effort was ever made to seduce the Protestant children from their faith. On the contrary, I have understood and fully believe, that the Superior and Sisters inculcated upon that portion of the scholars those principles only which are held in common by all Christians, and that they particularly discouraged the Catholic children from conversing on their peculiar religious tenets with their Protestant schoolmates.

What recommended the Seminary to me, in addition to the character of the instructors, were, its retirement, so favorable to study, the spacious accommodations of the interior and grounds, which permitted the young ladies to prosecute the ornamental as well as the elementary and essential parts of education, and the vigilant eye which was constantly kept over the children, both in school and during the hours of relaxation from study.

The intolerant and lawless spirit which marked the destruction of that building, the ferocious attack at midnight upon its occupants, resting for protection only on Heaven and their innocence, and the vile slanders which have since been circulated respecting this religious family, are equally unworthy of our age and country, and hostile to the spirit of our civil and religious institutions. One class of Christians is, with us, as much entitled to the protection of the law as any other; and, happily, no one may claim the

pre-eminence. There is need, too, I consider, of the united efforts of the sincere and virtuous of all denominations, to promote the common cause of religion, good manners, and the reign of the law.

PETER O. THACHER.

*Boston, September 1, 1834.*

NUMEROUS reports having been circulated in the community respecting the Convent at Charlestown, calculated to create prejudices against that institution, and injurious to the characters of the ladies who composed it, the subscribers, parents and guardians of children who have heretofore been placed there for instruction, impelled by a sense of justice to those ladies, as well as gratitude to them for their unwearied labors and cares for the education and happiness of the pupils under their charge, do hereby solemnly declare our entire disbelief of any and all the stories affecting the humane, religious and moral character of the nuns belonging to the Ursuline Convent — which stories, industriously circulated and eagerly believed by certain portions of the people, were used beforehand to effect the destruction of that establishment, by a lawless and brutal mob, and since to justify or palliate the shameful act: — many of these calumnies we believe to be merely the suggestions of base or prejudiced minds, without the shadow of foundation in fact; — some have originated in ignorance, religious bigotry or fanaticism, and others in the fabrications of a certain female, who had received only benefits at the hands of the Ursulines.

If she be not insane, which is the most charitable supposition, her ingratitude and lies exhibit a depravity of heart which has rarely been paralleled. Our interest and our duty has required of us to ascertain the truth of these reports. It was important to us not to deceive ourselves, or to be deceived by others, in a matter where the character and happiness of our children were concerned; and we have perfectly satisfied ourselves, that the Ursuline Community at Charlestown, was, what it professed to be, a religious and virtuous community, who had abandoned the vanities of the world, and devoted themselves to the service of God and their fellow creatures, and that their lives were pure and holy. We have visited the Convent frequently, and have seen the inmates with all necessary freedom — we had heard the accounts of what passed there from the children, and nothing has transpired but what has served to create feelings of esteem, respect and kindness towards the Institution and its members. No proselyte was ever made of a Protestant pupil, as far as we know, and we have never heard of any attempt to influence the peculiar religious tenets in which the pupils had been brought up. Those great truths of religion, which are common to most Christian sects, and those principles of pure and exalted virtue, which are approved by all, were inculcated by example as well as by precept. The school was, in our opinion, of the first order of excellence, and the terms were so moderate, as to bring it within the means of persons of the middling classes, and to show that profit was not the leading purpose of the establishment. That such a community should have had their rights of habitation, of person and property, violated in the manner they were, is not only an injury to the public, but affords melancholy evidence of the ignorance, intolerance and depravity of the people among whom it could take place, and that the laws of the land do not afford that security to the rights of individuals which we had hitherto supposed.

If our testimony shall have any effect towards enlightening the public, by exciting inquiry among those who honestly seek the truth, justice may be ultimately done to the character of the much-injured Ursulines, and the object of this communication will be attained.

SAMUEL P. P. FAY,  
LEVI THAXTER,  
WILLIAM COTTING,  
I. PETERS,  
S. K. WILLIAMS

*September 3, 1834*



*Milton Hill, September 4, 1834*

TO RICHARD S. FAY, Esq.

SIR:—In compliance with the wishes of the Investigating Committee of Boston, to hear the sentiments of the parents and guardians of the children who were placed at the Ursuline Community, upon its merits as a school and as the abode of quiet, unostentatious virtue; and to know whether sectarian doctrines have been taught to the children, and whether they ever heard or saw any cruelty or unkindness inflicted upon the children, or by the Ursulines upon each other; I reply, that I was entirely satisfied with the school, and believe it to have been administered kindly, morally, and intelligently. For more than a year previous to placing my children at the Institution, I examined anxiously every source of information respecting it. I learned from all the persons whom I had an opportunity to consult, whose children or friends had been placed there, that there was every cause of perfect confidence in that Community. I have known, from various parts of the country, former pupils, who have spoken of it with affection and respect—and I have, from my own observation, been perfectly satisfied that the pupils received the utmost care from the conscientious solicitude of the Community. I believe that their retired and regular habits of study form, in the pupils, a pure and solid character. I have understood that no attempt was made to influence their religious tenets: the children were permitted to attend worship in the chapel, or to decline it, if the parents wished. I have never known any punishments but loss of rank in the classes, or admonition. I have been satisfied that the discipline was mild and parental; and from the testimony of the pupils, the Ladies of the Community live in perfect union and harmony. From all that I have seen, and weighing all that I have heard, it would be my earnest wish that my children might be educated by them.

I may be exceeding the wishes of the Committee, to express any further comments upon the late outrage upon the Ursulines. I had but one child present at the firing of the Convent: my two elder children were absent with me on a distant journey: had they been present, the shock upon the delicate temperament of one of them, might have been fatal. The self-devoted intelligence of the Lady who presides over the Institution, during that frightful night, deserves from every mother the deepest gratitude and respect. It is this rare merit which has so eminently qualified her for the responsible station she holds there.

We do not belong to the Catholic Church.

With respect, your obedient servant,

LYDIA SMITH RUSSELL.

*Boston, Sept. 3, 1834.*

DEAR SIR:—Your favor of Monday, respecting the Ursuline Community, came to hand last evening.

I consider the Institution a very good one, and a first-rate school, where the pupils are taught every thing consistent with a good moral education.

Sectarian doctrines are not introduced in any degree: every thing about the Institution is conducted (to all appearance) with the most perfect order and harmony.

In haste, yours, &c.

TO R. S. FAY, Esq.

S. WILLIS.

P. S. I am not, nor have ever been, a Catholic.

*Boston, Sept. 4, 1834.*

R. S. FAY, Esq.

DEAR SIR:—Yours of the first inst. is at hand. In reply to your request for an expression of my sentiments in regard to the character of the Ursuline Community at Charlestown, I would observe, that, at the time the buildings occupied by that Community were so wantonly destroyed, I had two daughters there attending the school, their ages eleven and thirteen years;—for six months previous to sending my children to the school, I took every opportunity of gaining information respecting it; and so uniform were the statements in its favor, I determined and accordingly did put them there on the 20th of last May. My children inform me that they were very kindly treated by the Ursulines, and they have no doubt or reason to believe that any of the other children under their charge experienced different treatment. The instructors never attempted to introduce or instil their own views of religion into the minds of the scholars.

On the Sabbath, the Protestant children, embracing much the largest portion of the school, usually were assembled together to Protestant prayers, read to them by some one of the older scholars, and a portion of Scriptures committed to memory. No secrecy was ever enjoined on them.

Yours, very respectfully,

HALL J. HOW.

P. S. I would inform you that I am not a Catholic.

*Boston, Sept. 3, 1834.*

R. S. FAY, Esq.

DEAR SIR:—Yours of the 1st is before me. Mrs. Houghton had two sisters at the Convent at the time of the riot. They had been under the care of the Institution about seven or eight months.

Their improvement gave us perfect satisfaction. Considering the safety of the pupils, their freedom from temptations of every kind, the purity of morals taught, with the great devotion of the nuns to the general welfare of the scholars, induced us to esteem it as one of the best institutions in this community.

No attempt was made to impress the minds of our sisters with the peculiar religion of the Convent; and the young ladies inform us that they never knew an instance of the nuns attempting to influence the minds of pupils upon doctrinal points, or in any way interfering with their previous religious sentiments.

All the young ladies we have conversed with, agree in stating that they never saw or heard of any thing like severe punishment, much less cruelty, inflicted on any of the scholars; and they further state, that they never saw any thing but the most friendly and affectionate intercourse between the nuns.

I am *not* a Catholic.

Your ob't serv't,

N. HOUGHTON.

*Boston, Sept. 4, 1834.*

DEAR SIR:—It is with pleasure that I comply with the request of the Committee of Investigation, appointed by the citizens of Boston, in expressing my sentiments in regard to the school of the Ursuline Community. My eldest daughter attended that seminary about two and a half years, prior to the burning of the Convent. The teachers have been uniformly kind and unceasingly

devoted to the moral and intellectual improvement, and are not excelled in their attention to the health, tempers, and manners of the children. No sectarian doctrines are taught to the children, and my daughter informs me that she never saw any unkindness or cruelty inflicted upon the children, or by the Ursulines upon each other; on the contrary, it is strictly the quiet abode of unostentatious virtue. If there is purity in any human beings, I believe it to be found in these excellent women, the teachers of this school, the sisters of the order of St. Ursuline. My child was taken ill at the Convent, last summer, with the scarlet fever, and during that dangerous illness, she was nursed with unwearied care and kindness, which few can receive even at the hand of a mother. The goodness of *all* to her, and particularly sister Mary Clair, in whose immediate charge she was during her sickness, will always be remembered with feelings of deep gratitude, and a sense of obligation which can never be repaid. While my child was sick, Mrs. Bullard visited the Convent daily, and had free access to her and to any part of the Convent, several rooms of which she did visit, and this by particular invitation of the Lady Superior. With the exception of this sickness, my child has uniformly enjoyed good health. I think it decidedly the best institution in this country for the education of female youth.

Respectfully, yours, &c.

SILAS BULLARD.

N. B. I am not a Catholic.

S. B.

RICHARD S. FAY, Esq.

DEAR SIR:—I have delayed answering your note of the first instant, in order to give my family an opportunity to express their opinions of the Ursuline Institution and its merits, and as they are herewith enclosed, I shall make no comments. If you wish my own opinion, I can only say that, until I was acquainted with the school, I had the same prejudices against it that seems too generally to prevail now; but since I have placed my two daughters there, I have had occasion to visit the Institution frequently; and my wife has visited it more often than myself, and we have always returned from it with the highest opinion of its merits as a school for the education of young ladies, as they seemed so amiable and happy and perfectly contented. Until the Saturday previous to the riot, my wife visited the school, and my eldest daughter expressed fears to remain and wanted to return home, on account of the reports, that the buildings were to be destroyed; her fears were quieted, as being without a cause, and on Monday night it proved too true. I have always found it to all appearance, a place of unimpeachable virtue, and have never heard of any questions asked respecting religious tests, and I am fully persuaded that they use no such influence in the school, whatever their peculiar mode of worship may be among themselves. As to cruelty to the pupils or teachers, I have never heard any thing; and if people knew the teachers, they would not harbor such a thought. I sent my children to this school because I had heard of its merits, and I have not been disappointed. My daughters have made great improvement, and are now anxious to return to school. I am not a *Catholic*, nor do I expect to be. I sent my children because I thought and still think it stood among the first schools in the country, and the country will suffer by its loss.

THOMAS WHITMARSH.

Wednesday Evening, Sept. 3d, 1834.

N. B. I hope the same opportunity has been given to express their views, to those who have circulated unfavorable reports, in order that the facts may be fully made known.

T. W.

*Charlestown, Sept. 3, 1834.*

DEAR SIR :—Your favor of September 1st has been duly received, and agreeably to your request I feel it both a duty and a pleasure to communicate any thing that I may know as a parent, in relation to the Ursuline Community. I shall simply state such facts as are known to me as truths, unbiased by prejudice and unawed by fear. I know that rumor with its thousand tongues has been spreading its deadly poison, and that the ignorant and unprincipled, influenced by revenge and jealousy, have aimed a fatal blow at the religious sisters of the Ursuline Community. In the winter of 1828, after Mrs. ——— had given up her school, where I had my daughter placed, I was desirous of procuring another in a retired, healthy situation, where she would constantly have the precepts and examples of virtuous, well-educated ladies. After examining many of the plans in our first seminaries for the education of young ladies, I could not find one more congenial to my views, or, as I then thought and now think, better calculated for the moral and intellectual improvement of my daughter, than the Convent. Early in the spring of 1828, I accordingly placed her at the school, under the care of the Lady Superior and the sisters of the Community, for the purpose of having her instructed in all the useful and ornamental branches of female education. She remained at this school three years and a half. During that time she could have left at any moment, by giving proper notice, for any other school she might have preferred. I always had free access as a visitor during her residence at the Convent. I never saw any thing but the most perfect harmony among the sisters as well as the pupils ; every thing wore the appearance of neatness, regularity, and order. I never saw any thing that looked like unkindness or cruelty ; but, on the other hand, the pupils always appeared to be treated with the utmost tenderness and affection ; the ladies always endeavoring to do away every thing that looked like envy or jealousy in the school, by cultivating the most benevolent feelings of love and charity, with a view of teaching them their duty to God and each other.

I am not a Catholic, nor do I wish to have my daughter instructed in the Catholic religion. This I freely stated to the Superior when my daughter first entered the Convent. She fully assured me that her mind should be left perfectly free as to her religious opinions, and I do most sincerely believe that in no one instance she was ever influenced by the Superior to become a proselyte to the Catholic religion. It has been an established rule to have young ladies attend the services of the Catholic Church in the chapel. For a time, my daughter, as well as other young ladies living in Charlestown, had the privilege of coming home to spend the Sabbath ; but this I did not think expedient ; for this arrangement must directly or indirectly interfere with the devotions of the religious sisters, when a part of the scholars were to be prepared to leave and a part to remain in the Convent. I think myself it is far better for the young ladies to remain in the once quiet and peaceable walls of the Convent and read their Bibles, and hear such religious instruction as was within their reach, than to be walking the streets or visiting their friends. I cannot close this epistle, in justice to the Lady Superior and the sisters, without mentioning with gratitude their many acts of kindness to my daughter. During her residence at the Convent, she had a most severe illness, where she received every attention that the most devoted friends could bestow, by night as well as by day, from the sisters. I have endeavored to give my views of the Ursuline Community, so far as I have been connected with its inmates, and I hope that justice will be done them for the cruel wrongs they have suffered.

I remain, with due respect, yours, &c.

C. BALDWIN.

Watertown, September 4, 1834.

DEAR SIR :—I received your letter of the 1st inst. last evening, and now cheerfully give you such information as I possess relative to the late Ursuline Community, at Charlestown. About four years since, having a daughter then about 12 years of age, whom I wished to place at some respectable school, I was induced from hearing this institution spoken of in terms of high commendation, to place my child under the care of the Superior. She entered the Convent in February, 1831, and continued there until April, 1832. On the 1st December last, she again returned to the Convent, accompanied by a younger sister, then about 12 years of age, and both were in the Convent, when the recent unparalleled and barbarous outrage was committed, from whence they providentially escaped with their lives, loosing all their effects, save a few clothes caught up on the instant, to cover their persons. During those periods, the proficiency of my children in their various studies and pursuits were quite satisfactory. I believe they were ever treated with the greatest kindness and attention, having all their wants strictly attended to, and especially in sickness, watched over and attended with the most delicate tenderness and sympathy. They have ever appeared strongly attached to the Superior, and the other ladies who gave them instruction, and attended to their behavior. They have never complained of any severity, or unreasonable restraints, and they assure me that they never witnessed any thing but kindness from any individual of the Community towards any of the scholars; and that among the Sisterhood there always appeared to exist the most perfect harmony and affection. I am satisfied that not the slightest attempt has ever been made to instil into their minds any principles peculiar to the Catholic religion—on the contrary, I believe that every thing was scrupulously avoided that might have any tendency to attract their attention to it. They informed me that the Superior always restrained the Catholic children, even from conversing with the others on the subject of their religion. The strictest attention has always been paid to the moral conduct of the children, every exertion made to cultivate habits of industry, and to instil into their minds the charms of *truth*, and the beauty and importance of a virtuous life. I visited my children while at the Convent, as often as once in two weeks, and witnessed their hilarity and cheerfulness in their hours of recreation, have often seen them abroad, upon the grounds of the Convent, in company with their teachers, and noticed with pleasure the familiar and affectionate intimacy that appeared to subsist between them. I have frequently seen and conversed with the Superior and several of the other ladies of the Institution, and have always admired the simplicity and elegance of their deportment, modest demeanor, affable and unassuming manners, and sure I am that every one will admit, who has the pleasure of their acquaintance, that they are ladies of the first education, superior intelligence and highly cultivated minds. It may be thought that I possess strong prepossessions in favor of this Institution. If I do, they are imbibed from observation, a belief in the superiority and purity of its character, and the advantages and kindnesses that my children have received from its inmates. I think however that I shall hazard nothing in the assertion, that no parent who wishes his daughters to be instructed in the various branches of useful and ornamental education, can place them from their homes, in any situation with more perfect assurance that they will meet with affectionate and kind treatment, and receive every attention conducive to their improvement, happiness, health and morals, than at this Institution. I entertain no sentiments peculiarly favorable, to the Catholics or their religion, and those who know me, I am sure, will not be very ready to believe that I ever shall.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

LEVI THAXTER.

RICHARD S. FAY, Esq.

P. S. I requested my eldest daughter to give me her sentiments of the

Convent and its inmates in her own language upon paper, which she has done. I have thought proper to enclose it, which you are at liberty to use, if it will answer any good purpose, as you may think expedient.

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*Boston, Sept. 5, 1834.*

DEAR SIR :—In compliance with your request, I would inform you that in April of 1833, after due inquiry I became satisfied of the merits of the Ursuline School, and of its freedom from sectarian influences, and accordingly placed my daughter there, and during an intimate acquaintance with the Institution since that time, have never had occasion to change my opinion of its character.

Myself and family have visited the school freely, whenever we thought proper, and have always found the intercourse subsisting between the pupils and their teachers, such as could only have proceeded from uniformly kind and tender treatment, and I believe no *domestic* circle was ever more happy or more united in the bonds of love.

The instructresses have always inculcated, both by precept and example, the cultivation of kind and obliging dispositions, a strict regard for 'ruth, and a high respect for the simple principles of the Christian Religion, with an unceasing zeal which gave the strongest proof their *own* habitual and unostentatious virtue.

As I am not a Catholic, my connection with the school was begun and continued only from the belief that it possessed, on many accounts, superior advantages over any other similar institution with which I have ever been acquainted.

Yours, &c.

JAMES PAGE.

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It is due to the much abused Ursulines to say that the above testimonials are a few only of the many received, all speaking the same language and written in the same spirit.

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The following letter originally appeared in the Bunker-Hill Aurora:

URSULINE COMMUNITY Died, on the 18th instant, at the residence of the Ursuline Community, Brinley place, Roxbury, Mrs. St. Henry, aged 20 years and 6 months. This beautiful girl was sick at Mount Benedict when the Convent was burned, and suffered a dreadful shock in the horrors of that awful night, from which she never recovered. On the following morning, she was removed to the house of the Sisters of Charity, in Boston, where she lingered till the 11th inst. when she was removed to the place where she died. At this time she was so low that she could not stand alone, and it seemed hardly possible to remove her; but she could not bear to be separated from the beloved ladies of the Community, and they literally took her and carried her over like an infant in their arms. She was pleased with their new situation, and enjoyed the scenery very much. The afternoon before she died, her bed was turned round, so that she could see Mount Benedict from her window. She viewed it a long time, and seemed much consoled with the fact that Mount Benedict could be so distinctly seen from Brinley place. During the course of her illness, so far from manifesting any ill-will against the ruffians who, by demolishing the Convent, had been accessory to her death, she often expressed a pity for them, and prayed that they might be forgiven. On the night of the 17th, she slept sweetly, and on the 18th departed from this to a better world. She expired without a struggle, having no agony at all.

The death of this lady has revived the sad scene of that memorable night, when, doubtless she received her death blow. It is true, she was in a consumption, but it is also true that on the day preceding that night, she was able to give instruction to a music class, and was so very comfortable that I felt warranted in giving an opinion to the Superior, that she would continue through the winter. It is now my full conviction that the shock of that night hurried this innocent young creature to an untimely grave; a creature who, I firmly believe, never harmed nor thought harm to any living thing, and whose last breath was spent in praying for the deluded wretches who had frightened away her gentle spirit before its time. This affecting event has called up my attention afresh to a train of reflections, which have been passing in my mind ever since the Convent was burnt, and seems to offer me a fit occasion to present these reflections to the public. I thought to do this before, but do not regret the delay for several reasons: first, because at the time the Convent was burnt the public mind was so grossly abused and so strongly excited by strange reports, that a plain statement, such as I should make, would not be so likely to be regarded then as it may now, when prejudice, ignorance, misrepresentation and fanaticism are happily giving place to a spirit of rational investigation of facts; and, secondly, I confess that my own mind, which was greatly disturbed, has now become so much more calm, that I am better fitted to offer my reflections to my fellow-citizens now than I was immediately after the horrible outrage was committed; and lastly, as the Ursuline Community is now removed beyond the immediate circle of my profession, I may hope to be heard as a disinterested witness in behalf of that much injured Community.

In the beginning of the year 1828, I was anxiously looking round for a school for one of my daughters, who was then about 13 years of age. Happening to take up a newspaper, the Prospectus of the Ursuline Community met my eye, and after full inquiry I was satisfied, and placed my daughter at the Convent School, where she remained till she completed her academic education, entirely to the satisfaction of my whole family. During the time of my daughter's schooling, by the kindness of the Superior, I obtained a special privilege of placing one of my nieces, (whose age, then 17, was beyond the regular rule of admission) in the Convent, where she remained about 15 months, with the greatest possible advantage to her education, manners, and character. My youngest daughter entered the Convent when her sister came out, but after a short time her health (always precarious from her infancy) became so poor, that I took her from the Convent; and for 6 months succeeding she did not attend any school, and has never since been able to pursue her studies regularly. From the 1st of April, 1828, till the 10th of July, 1829, I had nothing to do with the Convent, only as a school. A medical gentleman from Boston being the attending physician. As many of my friends blamed me for putting my daughter and niece to the Convent School, and as constant inquiries were made of me about that school, I was very particular indeed to inquire of my child and niece, especially the latter, who was older than her cousin, and a very intelligent, shrewd, and above all as honest-hearted a girl as ever lived; I inquired, I say, of them respecting every thing that was going on at the Convent; and from the information they gave me, and from such other sources of information as were within my reach, I was perfectly satisfied that the Convent School was and continued to be, to the very day their school-house was burned down, a most excellent school. I believe the ladies who had the charge of it were not only exceedingly well qualified to teach, and eminently faithful and successful in teaching the various branches of education which they professed, but I also firmly believe that they are ladies of irreproachable character and reputation—I know they are ladies of elegant accomplishments and soft and gentle manners, and I believe they were ever kind to their pupils, and very watchful over their health, morals, and manners.

I have always considered this school as invaluable to most of the young females who were placed in it—many of them are the children of wealthy and

fashionable families — exposed at home to all the dazzling influences of high life, of brilliant scenery, of the noise and bustle of perpetual company, of irregular hours, and often of excessive indulgence in rich food and dress. To take such children away from situations so unfavorable to the cultivation of the mind and the health of the body, and to place them in a beautiful and healthy retreat, and in a school established on a system of simple diet, regular hours of study, food, recreation and rest, and neat and strict uniformity of dress — under the example and tuition of ladies of high education — of elegant manners — of soft voices and pure conversation — ladies entirely separated from the world, and wholly devoted to their God and their pupils — is indeed a blessing to such children, which may be imagined, but cannot be described. Almost all the children who attended the Convent school were children of Protestant parents — of course, in their studies, in their conversations, in their recreations, in their social associations, in every thing indeed, but the forms of daily devotion, which occupied no more of their time in this, than is usually devoted to the same service under different forms, in other well regulated Protestant schools ; for every valuable purpose of education — this was in reality a Protestant school. The teachers, it is true, were Catholics in their religion, but not teachers of the Catholic religion to their pupils. This distinction ought to be clearly understood, and the fact ought to be known, for it is solemnly true, that the teachers of the *Ursuline* school did not attempt to instil the *peculiar tenets of their faith, into the minds of their scholars* — the pretence that they did so, stands, up to this hour, wholly unsupported by the slightest shadow of proof. Whether it be right for Protestants to support a seminary for education set up by Catholics, is a question on which good men may, and do differ widely and honestly. But when the Catholics, who have an undoubted right to do so, have set up such a seminary, then whether it be right to represent them truly, or to misrepresent them shamefully, is no sort of a question at all with good men, for every good man will acknowledge at once, that a Catholic seminary is as much entitled to legal protection, and to fair and just representation as any other.

Those parents who sent their children to Mt. Benedict school, sent them there, not because it was set up by Catholics, but because in their opinion it was the best school they could send them to. I am sure this was the reason which decided my mind. Nor is this the only instance with me. Several years ago, I sent one of my sons to be fitted for college to a celebrated academy, when I knew that the principal of that academy (according to my views of such matters) was one of the greatest religious bigots on earth, but I knew also that he was a capital classical scholar, and I considered him better qualified to teach my son than any other man I knew of, so I sent him to be prepared for college, not expecting that any particular sectarian influence would be used with him. In this matter however, I think very differently of the course which was pursued at the Academy, with my son, and at the Convent with my daughter. It is said, that the teachers of the *Ursuline* school are religious devotees. They are so. And it is my solemn conviction, that these pious females live habitually in the fear of God, serving him devoutly, and in sincerity and truth, according to the forms and ceremonies of their religious education ; and while the enlightened protestant christian may pity what he believes to be the errors of their faith, he cannot but respect and admire that sublimated piety, which leads its young and beautiful votaries, to a voluntary martyrdom of the world. Would it not be well too, for those who have not been religiously educated in any form, whose minds have not yet been instructed into the sublime truths, and whose hearts have not yet felt the heavenly influences of Christian love — charity, forbearance, brotherly kindness and forgiveness, — would it not be well for such, to pause and consider, how far they are qualified to sit in judgment on the motives, feelings and actions of those whose whole course of education, thoughts and habits have been so entirely different from their own. While it is readily granted, that the



teachers of the Ursuline school, are, in a devotional sense, religious devotees, it is contended that they are not exclusively so—they are devotees also to the cause of female education. To them, their school is, next to their God, and it is all beside. Thoroughly educated teachers—exclusively devoted for life to the Ursuline school—is the true secret of its superiority.

Such are my opinions, views, and feelings, in reference to the institution at Mt. Benedict, which, (as I have already stated,) I knew only as a school from the time it was opened in April 1828, till July 10th, 1829, at which time I was called as a Physician, and have been continued as such, ever since. During a period of more than five years, which has elapsed since I visited the Convent as a Physician, there has been a good deal of sickness there, and I have been there very often, and of course have had a good opportunity to become intimately acquainted with each individual member of the community; and it is not too much for me to say, that I do know what has been passing within the walls of the convent, better than those who were never inside of it; and I do now solemnly declare in the presence of the whole world, that according to my sincere belief, the females who composed the Ursuline Community, are ladies of pure characters and blameless lives, and that in their different places and stations, they have severally been well qualified for their respective duties, and have performed those duties kindly, conscientiously, and faithfully, to their pupils and to each other. The Superior—thoroughly educated, dignified in her person, and elegant in her manners, pure in her morals, of generous and magnanimous feelings, and of high religious principles—is in truth a most worthy lady, who richly merits her title and her station.

I have been induced to submit the foregoing statement to the public, under a strong sense of justice to a Community of good and useful females, whose motives and conduct appear to me, to be strangely misunderstood, and most cruelly misrepresented, and who have been driven away from their peaceful retreat, by the greatest outrage which stains the history of civilized society.

ABRAHAM R. THOMPSON.

*Charlestown, Oct. 25, 1834.*

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The annexed affidavit of Dr. Thompson proves two facts, both of which directly disprove two important assertions of the Committee of Publication of Miss Reed's book.

*Charlestown, April 1, 1835.*

I have this day received a note, requesting me, as Physician of the Ursuline Community, to give an opinion on some of the statements respecting the Convent in Miss Reed's book. Not having read the book, I immediately procured a copy of it, and having run it over, I find some things in it, which in justice to the Ursuline Community, I feel bound to notice. In the introduction, page 42, I find the following paragraph:

“This then is the whole amount of the dwelling being accessible at proper times to the parents and friends of the pupils there. They were admitted to a common parlor, and not permitted to enter any other room in that spacious establishment. No Protestant eye ever saw the apartments of the Nuns, except on the occasion when the Selectmen of Charlestown examined the building by appointment, the day before the riot. *Even the Physician*, as we understand, never saw any of the Religieuse, to prescribe for them, in their private apartments; when sick, they were attended by the infirmarian—one of their own order.”

Now I believe this whole paragraph is not true,—in point of fact, so far as it respects the Physician, I know it is absolutely and unqualifiedly false. In the narrative part, Miss Reed labors to impress on her readers that Miss M. Mag-

delene was treated with great cruelty. Miss M. Magdalene, and a lay-sister, (Martha,) both died of consumption at the Convent, and were both attended by me. During their sickness, I believe they were both properly nursed and taken care of. The Superior often attended me in my visits to them, and always manifested a kind concern for their care and support—and they had the best services of the experienced and faithful nurse or “*infirmarian*,” sister Mary Clair, acting under my directions. I visited Martha in her own apartment, and attended her there, till she died. In regard to Miss M. Magdalene, I once had a conversation with Miss Reed about her—Miss Reed, as I understood leaving the Convent, had been a good deal about Charlestown—and I had been told by several persons, that she said she wished very much to see Dr. Thompson—she wanted to ask him some important questions, and could tell him some terrible things about the Convent. In the latter part of June, or first of July, 1834, I met Miss Reed, for the first time in my life, at a house where I was attending a sick child. On being introduced to Miss Reed, and speaking of the Convent, she brought up the case of Miss M. Magdalene, and asked me if I knew how much Miss M. Magdalene suffered. I asked her what sufferings she referred to. She replied: “Oh, Doctor no tongue can tell what Miss M. Magdalene suffered.” Again I entreated her to specify the kind of sufferings—did she mean that Miss M. Magdalene suffered from bodily pain, or distress of mind, or from cruel treatment?—I begged her to tell me. But in vain—all that I could get out of her was—that no tongue could tell, what Miss M. Magdalene suffered. I left Miss R. under a full conviction, that she was an artful girl—in reality telling nothing—yet insinuating dreadful things; but at the same time, craftily avoiding all responsibility. Nothing else about the Convent passed between us.

ABM. R. THOMPSON.

MIDDLESEX, ss. Charlestown, April 3, 1835. Then Abraham R. Thompson personally appeared and made oath to the truth of the statement by him subscribed, as above witten.

Before me, JOHN SOLEY, Justice of the Peace.

The affidavit of Eliab Stone Brewer and Francis W. Story is hereby annexed, to disprove calumnies lately alleged in some of the public prints, charging the Ursuline Convent with selfishness.

Having heard it had been asserted that no instance could be produced of any charities by the Ursuline Community, while resident upon Mount Benedict, I, Eliab Stone Brewer, of Boston, a Protestant, on the thirty-first day of March, 1835, rode over to the neighborhood of Mount Benedict, with Francis W. Story, to make inquiry upon the subject, having always heard that the Ursuline Community was an order of charity, and being desirous of ascertaining the truth of this charge against them.

We first went to Mrs. Kelley's. In answer to my inquiry of her, she said her children had frequently received money from the Community, and other kindnesses.

We then went to Mr. Fitch Cutter's. Mrs. Cutter said that, upon one occasion, Mr. Cutter went with a subscription paper to the Lady Superior, where a man had lost his barn by fire, and she gave him *ten dollars*, and told him to call under similar circumstances, and she would always be willing to give. Mrs. C. further remarked, that she had been kind in many instances, but the general opinion was, *that she did it to get the good will of her neighbors*.

We then went to Mrs. Fillebrown, at the place called Washington's Head

Quarters — said she had worked for the Ursuline Community, and that she must in truth say, that the Lady Superior was a very charitable woman.

We then went to Mrs. Stearns's, *the second house on the Charlestown side of the Convent gate*. She had no personal knowledge of the Lady Superior, but had heard many acts of her kindness and charity.

We then went to Mrs. Stevens's, where we saw a girl of about 15 years of age. She informed us, that once, when her sister was taken sick, her mother was in want of old linen, and sent to the Lady Superior, who sent her the linen and other presents, and was very kind to her.

We then went to Mr. Runey, Selectman: said he thought he had been ill treated by the Lady Superior; but knew that she had given away a great deal, and mentioned several instances — among others, \$5 to his son, for the "Boy's Library;" \$52 to the Bunker Hill monument, &c. &c. We inquired no further, being satisfied, from what we heard, that her hand was always ready to extend relief while she had the means to give. We found but this general acknowledgment of her bounties from these persons, whom we inquired of at hazard, and without any previous knowledge of them, or what they would say; and we inquired of no other persons.

ELIAB STONE BREWER,  
FRANCIS WINSHIP STORY.

*Commonwealth of Massachusetts,*  
SUFFOLK, APRIL 2, 1835.

Personally appeared the above-named Eliab Stone Brewer and Francis W. Story, and made oath that the foregoing statement, by them subscribed, is true.

JONA. CHAPMAN, *Justice of the Peace.*

*It is with the sincerest pleasure that the following letter from the Boston Courier, by the Rev. Dr. Byrne, is submitted to the reader. His account of Miss R.'s baptism differs, though not materially, from the description of it in note to page 13, which was given from memory by one present at the ceremony. A newspaper remarks upon the letter, that it contains mere assertions! Does Miss Reed do more than assert?*

#### THE CONVENT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE COURIER. — Sir — I find in Miss Reed's book about the Convent, recently published, that she attributes language to me, which, if used, as stated by her, would be highly unbecoming and exceptionable; and, from the persual of it, some may suppose that I used, or endeavored to use, over Miss Reed, an undue and improper influence. I pray you to allow me, through the columns of your paper, to endeavor to exculpate my character, by relating in what, and how far, I have been concerned in her regard. Let a candid and impartial public then judge.

In March, 1831, Mrs. Graham, with whom I was then but slightly acquainted, after the service and instructions I gave on a Wednesday evening in the Church, went into the Vestry, and told me there was a young lady in the Church who wished to be introduced to me, but that she would not do it without my consent, at that late hour, and especially as she knew but little of her herself. She then introduced Miss Reed, to whom, after a short conversation,

I said, I would gladly see her at my house, when she could conveniently call, and would give her any information she required about the Catholic religion. Mrs. Graham afterwards informed me, that Miss Reed had called on her before, to accompany her to the evening instruction in the Catholic Church, but that she could not go on that evening; that when Miss Reed called on her on the evening she introduced her, she told her she could not go, on account of her daughter's sickness; but seeing Miss Reed burst into tears at the disappointment, she requested a friend to remain with her daughter, and accompanied Miss Reed to the Church, not knowing, all the time, that Miss Reed wanted to be introduced to me; that it was only on the termination of the instruction, Miss Reed expressed her wish to that effect; and that, on remonstrating with her on account of the lateness of the hour, Miss Reed declared she would not leave the Church until introduced. Would it be unreasonable, now, to suppose that Miss Reed acted thus in consequence of the resolution she had formed, as mentioned in page 52 of the Narrative, to become acquainted with some one who would introduce her to the Superior of the Ursuline Community, and of having been foiled in her interview with Bishop Fenwick, alluded to in page 58 — that it was for this purpose she got herself introduced to Mrs. Graham — and that it was not Mrs. Graham that first urged and requested her to see me, as intimated in pages 60 and 61?

Miss Reed, in page 186 of her Narrative, leaves it to the reader to judge of her motives for becoming a member of the Ursuline Community. She has not, at least as far as I have been able to discover, told the reader what motives first induced her to think of becoming a Catholic. She states in her letter to her friends (page 36), that her mother, previous to her death, reminded her of the solemn obligation she had taken upon herself at the time of her baptism in the Episcopal Church in Cambridge; and also that she had consulted with Rev. Mr. Croswell, Pastor of Christ Church, Boston, previously to her joining the Catholics. She informed me, whilst coming for instruction, that she had seen the Rev. Mr. Croswell previously to her joining the Catholics. Would it be a wrong conclusion, if the attentive reader of her Narrative were to attribute her motives for becoming a Catholic, to her strong desire of becoming an inmate of the Convent?

In a few days after being introduced to me, Miss Reed called at my house, accompanied by another person (I believe a Miss Hawkins). When questioned as to her motives for wishing to join the Catholic Church, she told me, several times, that it was in compliance with her mother's wishes and request, expressed to her (Miss Reed) on her death bed. Will not this appear strangely in contradiction to what she has stated in her letter to her friends? She also told me, more than once, that her mother would have died a Catholic, had she had an opportunity; and that her mother had told her so. I said to her, that, in choosing her religion, it was well to pay some attention to her parent's advice; but that she must be influenced, not by any worldly motives or considerations, but chiefly and solely by a love of truth, and a desire to serve God in the best manner; and in giving her books, I desired her to examine them carefully, to compare the passages of Scripture in them with her Bible, not to pass over any until fully satisfied and convinced of its truth, and if she should not understand any part, to mark the page, that it might be explained when she called again. When Miss Reed first came to me, she was staying, or, as she would have it, visiting, in a family of the name of Hawkins; and I believe she did not live with her father from that time until she left the Convent. She stated to me, that her father had driven her from his house, or that she was obliged to leave it, on account of his ill treatment to her in consequence of her determination to become a Catholic. In a few weeks after being introduced to me, she came to reside at No. 29 Austin street. I was informed this arrangement was made by persons who heard her account of the ill treatment, and of her fear of her friends, and who, witnessing her desire, wished she might have a better opportunity of coming to me for instruction. She continued to reside in Mr. Hoyne's family in Austin street, and occasionally in Mr. Payne's, opposite the Catholic Church in Richmond street, until she went to

the Convent. As she states in page 65, that she employed herself while there in doing ornamental work for her Catholic friends, and also in working lace for the Bishop, the altar, &c. — and again in the next page, that her time was wholly employed in working for the Catholics; some may suppose that a part, at least, of this work was for me, or for the altar in our Church. I never received from Miss Reed any thing for myself, or for the church, or for the altar.

Having directed her attention to it, and inquired about her former baptism, I considered there was a reasonable doubt as to its validity, from the *manner* in which she informed me it was administered; and not, as some might be led to suppose from what she mentions on the subject (page 66), because Catholics consider baptism administered by Protestants generally invalid. I informed her she might be received by the name of Rebecca Theresa, or any other she preferred; and she herself chose Mary Agnes Theresa. Then, after about three months' instruction, I administered baptism to her by this name, using the conditional form, "If thou art not baptized, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." I was not her sponsor. She continued receiving instructions for about three months longer, before she was admitted to the Holy Eucharist or Communion.

After Miss Reed went to Mr. Hoyne's, she came to me for instruction generally once or twice a week, and sometimes oftener. On many of these occasions, she used to express the strongest desire that she could get into the Convent; she did not care in what capacity. She often said that if she could not succeed in this, she would go and retire into a cave or grotto in Boscawen, New Hampshire. I always advised her not to think of joining any religious order, at least for some years, until she would be fully and thoroughly acquainted with the Catholic religion, and with the duties that would, in such a place, be required of her. After seeing some specimens of her writing, and being able to judge, as I then imagined, of her disposition, I used to tell her that I thought she would not, and could not, be received as an Ursuline at Mount Benedict; and every time I said so to her, she would hold down her head, and appear to cry, and sometimes to sob. On the same page (61) where she mentions having heard an affecting sermon on Good Friday evening (which was April 1st), she says, that by this time she had become a constant visitor at the Convent. And from other parts of the Narrative, a person might suppose that she had frequently visited, and been well acquainted with the Superior, even before she was introduced to me. This, however, I believe, was not the case. Miss Reed had been a considerable time at Mr. Hoyne's before I yielded to her oft-repeated entreaties to give her a letter of introduction to the Superior; and when I did so, it did not procure for Miss Reed the desired interview. It was only when I next saw the Superior, and told her that I did not consider Miss Reed a fit person to become a member of their Community, that is, an Ursuline, that my object in wishing her to see Miss Reed, was, that perhaps she (the Superior) might succeed in disabusing her of her notions about becoming a nun: it was, I say, only after this explanation, that the Superior consented, and even then with some reluctance, to see Miss Reed.

In her letter to her friends, Miss Reed mentions (page 37), that when she began to write her Narrative, she was able to make only memoranda. I suppose she meant to show how good her memory was, by marking as quotations, language that she attributes to me as well as to others. Now, if it be shown that her memory failed her, — that she contradicts herself — and that too in matters which may well be supposed to have made on a mind like Miss Reed's a deep and lasting impression, — will it be unreasonable to conclude that she mistakes, to say the least of it, in other parts of her Narrative? In page 72, she says that on Sabbath morning, August 5th, 1831, she was attended to the gate of the Convent by her friend Mrs. Graham, that is, when she went to reside at the Convent. After sighing so long, and desiring so ardently to become an inmate of the Convent, surely Miss Reed

would not easily forget the happy day when all her wishes were realized. To show that she did not, she marks the day and date; and as if to show the more particularly, this is the only date she gives in the whole of her Narrative, at least as far as I have been able to discover. Now, I beg you to observe, first, that the 5th of August, in 1831, fell not on a Sabbath or Sunday, but on Friday; next, she states (page 66), that she stood sponsor for Mrs. Graham's daughter; now, this, according to the record made of it at the time, was September 4th, 1831. Further: I received three notes from the Superior relative to Miss Reed, bearing date August 12th, September 2d, and September 11th, 1831. In the one dated September 2d, the Superior writes: "I think it best that Miss Reed should make her Confession and Communion before she enters;" and in the one of September 11th, "If she (Miss Reed) has made it (her first communion) to-day, will you be kind enough to direct her to come here, immediately after High Mass?" Now, let the impartial reader compare these dates with that given by Miss Reed, and judge.

On page 67, Miss Reed says she was questioned by the Superior with regard to a conversation which took place between her brother and herself on Charlestown Bridge, an account of which was published in the Jesuit, highly exaggerated, as she says. If you look at the following pages, you will, I am confident, say that the interview at which the questions were, if at all, asked, must have taken place some time before she went to reside at the Convent. Now, if Miss Reed was right in stating that she went to the Convent August the 5th (1), how did she know of the publication in the Jesuit of August 6th, relative to that conversation? Did she read the Jesuit in the Convent? Does she say that such reading occupied any part of her time while there? When did she ask me, as mentioned in a note at the bottom of page 67, to explain to her what that publication meant? When did I promise to have it corrected? By whom was the conversation exaggerated? By way of explanation, let me relate how the meeting with her brother occurred, and the account given of it at the time by Miss Reed herself. For some time previous to June 12th, Ellen Munnigle, of Milkrow, then about 14 years of age, used to come, with others, to the Church to get instructions, preparatory to receiving Communion and Confirmation. On one of these occasions, this girl called to see Miss Reed, who, then, living very retired (see note page 70), was advised to accompany this girl, for the sake of a walk, on the Prison Bridge, leading from Charlestown to the Canal or Cragie's Bridge. When she saw her brother, she desired the girl to go off quick. There was, then, no one to give any account of the conversation, but Miss Reed and her brother. By whom was it exaggerated? Miss Reed returned to Mr. Payne's in tears, much excited, and apparently in danger of swooning. She urged Mrs. Payne, in the most pressing manner, to go for me immediately. Not being at home at the time, I did not see Miss Reed until after night-fall. When I called, I found Miss Reed still in tears, and was informed by her and by Mrs. Payne, to whom she had already told the story, that her brother met her on the bridge, shook her violently by the arm, and threatened to throw her over into the water. Thinking the story to be true, I mentioned it a few days afterwards to Dr. O'Flaherty, in Boston, without the least intention or expectation that it would be made public. And though the meeting occurred in the beginning of June, nothing relative to it was published in the Jesuit until August. Now, if no such conversation took place between her brother and herself, why did she say that it did? Was it to excite in her behalf the greater sympathy of the Catholics? Let the candid reader judge if she was likely to ask me to explain what the publication of it meant.

The next morning after Miss Reed left the Convent, Mrs. Graham's brother, Mr. James Manson, called on me, told me the circumstances, and

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1 To get rid of this contradiction, it is now said that the date was misprinted, and that it should be Aug. 7th. But the difficulty, the reader will perceive, is not got over by this correction. The time is not carried forward far enough.

requested I would go and see her. I told him, in reply, that from the manner in which she left the Convent, and the language he said she used at Mr. Kidder's (the house to which Miss Reed went on making her escape), I supposed Miss Reed did not want to see me, and I declined going. He said Mrs. Graham felt very anxious and apprehensive lest she might be blamed for what she had done in regard to Miss Reed, and wished to ask my advice; I then promised to go in the afternoon. I would here remark, that neither Mrs. Graham nor her brother were members of the Catholic Church at that time, nor for a long time after; and I believe that Miss Reed's language and conduct contributed not a little to induce them to become Catholics. When I went to Milkrow, Mrs. Graham repeated to me the circumstances of the preceding evening, and said Miss Reed wished to see me. At this interview with Miss Reed, during which I took care that other persons should be present. I expressed my regret for her leaving the Convent as she did, knowing that she might have left it otherwise, if she wished; and my hope that she would not make it more public, fearing lest it might redound to the injury of the Convent. She accused the Bishop and Superior, but in general terms, of being bad, wicked persons. When pressed to tell what the Superior had done to her, she said she deceived her, by promising her at one time that she would be admitted to become an Ursuline, and telling her, at other times, she would not. I said to her, that if the Superior had acted wrong towards her, I hoped she would not do so, by now forsaking the religion she had embraced after mature deliberation. Miss Reed appeared to get angry, even at the suggestion of such an idea, and said she would die sooner than abandon her religion. Seeing a sheet of paper on the table by her side, with a few words written on it, I asked what she had been writing. She then showed me a slate, on which was written the draught of a letter, she said, to Miss Kennedy, in New York (the person so often mentioned by the name of Mary Francis), informing her of the step she had taken (1), and asking her advice and assistance to get to the Sisters of Charity at Emmetsburg. I did not say, as she states in page 178, that I had conveyed a novice to the Sisters of Charity. Not only I had not done so, but at that time had not advised or recommended any persons to go to that Institution. I did not offer to convey Miss Reed to them, for I knew they would not receive her. She expressed her fears that the Catholics would kill her for having run away from the Convent. I told her she need not be the least alarmed or uneasy on that account. Had she really any such fears? Besides Mrs. Graham's daughter, there was another Catholic, Mr. Barr, in the house; and after remaining five weeks in that house, she spent more than a week with Mr. and Mrs. Payne, both Catholics. It was not until the next day after this interview with Miss Reed, I informed the Superior where she was. On Saturday, the 21st, I again went to Milkrow, saw and conversed with Miss Reed in the presence of Mr. Barr, who offered to retire, but at my request remained. The account of this second interview, as given in pages 181 and 182 of the narrative, is entirely incorrect. It is not true that Miss Reed did not consent to see me until after much persuasion from Mrs. Graham. Mrs. Graham was not at home at the time. She had gone to the Convent, in compliance with the request in the Superior's letter, which she received the preceding day. I then knew nothing of Miss Reed's father or relations, but what I had learned from Miss Reed herself; so that even if I had spoken as she states, which I deny, it must have been upon the strength of her own information. I did not ask her to go to the Superior, for I well knew the Superior did not wish to see her. So far from saying she did not then believe in the Catholic religion, she expressed her hopes of getting to the Sisters of Charity, through the assistance of Miss Kennedy. She did

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1 That she did not actually inform Miss K. of the "step she had taken," in her first letter, is, however, it is believed, susceptible of clear proof.

not say she believed I would take her life, or that she would not trust herself in my clutches again. No, no. She did not, at least, seem to entertain such a bad opinion of me. For, the next morning after she received the letter mentioned in page 184, she came to my room *alone*, to show me the letter, and to ask my advice. In that letter Miss Kennedy expressed her regret for the manner in which Miss Reed had left the Convent, and advised her not to let it be known to any one, but to the good lady (Mrs. Graham) to whose house she had gone, and to her confessor. I asked why she did not follow Miss Kennedy's advice in this respect, as she pretended to have done in leaving the Convent; and reminded her that I was not her confessor since she had gone to the Convent. I have thought it was this expression of mine, that induced Miss Reed to go to confession to me in the afternoon of the same day. In a few days she came again to my room, and *alone*. She did not appear much afraid to trust herself in my clutches, or that I would take her life. She asked my advice what to do, and wished she could get to New York. I again directed her attention to Miss Kennedy's letter, and showed her that Miss Kennedy promised nothing specific, but only that she would do all in her power to procure her (Miss Reed) a situation, if she did go to New York. I told her that, considering all the circumstances, the only advice I could give her, was to try to get into some family where she might support herself by her work, or to return to her friends; and that I feared, if she did the latter, she would be prevailed upon or induced to forsake the Catholic religion. When I mentioned this, she held down her head, and seemed to cry, as formerly; and declared, as she did at Milkrow, that she would never abandon her religion; and hoped I had a better opinion of her than to think she would ever do such a thing.

Having by this time some suspicions of her sincerity, I watched her more closely than I used on former occasions, and perceived that not only there were no streams of tears flowing down her cheeks, but that not a drop even appeared in her eyes. Next day, she sent Mrs. Payne again to ask my advice. Mrs. Payne told me that Miss Reed had sent her, the day before, with a message to her sister in Boston, and that her friends did not appear very anxious for her return to them. Miss Reed often expressed a wish, since she left the Convent, and particularly to Mrs. Payne, that I would employ her as organist in our Church. I desired Mrs. Payne to tell Miss Reed that I had no advice to send her, but what I gave herself the preceding day. Miss Reed, now finding she would not be supported idle by her Catholic friends, sent for her brother, with whom she left Mr. Payne's. Her father, I was told, had called to see her a few days before.

Since Miss Reed left the Convent, I have heard much of her crucifying herself, and other of her antics, before she went to the Convent; but, as they did not come under my own observation, I will not mention them here. I will say, however, that unquestionably, had I been informed of them at the proper time, I would not have so easily received her, nor admitted her to Communion, even after about six months' instruction.

Now, with regard to the facts, and circumstances, and conversations, which I have mentioned as having occurred in the presence, and within the knowledge of other persons, I can confidently appeal to these persons to confirm the truth of them as by me stated. As to the conversations that took place between Miss Reed and myself, when no other person was present, and concerning which she is either silent, or gives a different version from what I have stated, I would ask the reader to bear in mind, that, besides the difference of her stories to me, and, I may add, to others, concerning, for instance, her mother, the conversation with her brother, and what she states, concerning these, in her book, she herself acknowledges that she acted with duplicity and dissimulation in the Convent; and then I do not hesitate to leave to a candid and impartial public to judge between Miss Reed's veracity and mine. When it is considered that she acted thus in



the Convent, according to her own acknowledgment, will it appear incredible to suppose, that she was capable of acting with similar dissimulation on other occasions?

I remain, sir, you obedient servant,

P. BYRNE.

Charlestown, March 31, 1835.

*The letters of Hiram O. Alden, Esq., to Judge Fay, and Miss Alden's letters enclosed, referred to in the "Preliminary Remarks."*

Belfast, Me. Sept. 4, 1834.

SIR:—Herewith you will receive two letters from my sister, Caroline, in answer to yours recently addressed to her. Inasmuch as she has submitted them to my perusal, I cannot forbear to add (although unsolicited, and notwithstanding I am a Protestant in my own religious views and feelings) my testimony in corroboration of some facts stated by her.

In the year 1827, she, before entering the Convent, resided with me, in Belfast. In 1831, she wrote me, expressing a desire to return to her friends. Although I had disapproved of the first step, I wrote her that she was at liberty to return, and make my house again her home. She accordingly returned, and has since resided with her friends here. She has never intimated that she was under any *restraint*, which prevented her from leaving the Convent before, but, on the contrary, always said she was at *perfect liberty* to leave when she chose. She then and still entertains the highest respect for the character of the Ursuline Community. She regards them as worthy Christians, actuated by a sincerity of profession, and a purity of purpose, to be found only in those who are, in truth, devoted to the service of God. But as strongly attached as she was to the Lady Superior, and her estimable Community,—as much as she loved and respected those whom she believed to have dedicated themselves to a pure life and a holy conversation—still she found she had a *stronger tie* to her Protestant friends. Unable to subdue her *natural affections*, she could not overcome her desire to return to her kindred. But the exalted terms of affection, in which she always speaks of the Superior and the members of her Community—the veneration she has for their religious institutions and forms of worship—are a sufficient guaranty that her statements in relation to the character of both, are the undisguised sentiments of her heart.

She has recommended the school at the Convent as one deserving the patronage of every parent, who has a daughter to educate, whether they be Catholic or Protestant (there being no interference with the religious opinions of the scholar); and I had some time since come to the determination to send my daughter there, as soon as she arrives at a suitable age. Her commendation of the principles upon which the school was conducted, inclined me to the belief that it was the most suitable seminary, within my knowledge, for the education of female youth.

Thus much I have been constrained to say, hoping it may subserve the cause of *truth and justice*—for I hold it to be the duty of every good citizen, in this land of ours, where *all religions are tolerated*, to raise his voice and his arm against the *first* attempt at religious oppression or intolerance; and if the recent vile outrage against liberty and law, committed upon the unoffending members of the Ursuline Community, should be traced to that source, those religious zealots and fanatics who have aided, abetted or countenanced such a shameful violation of private rights, should be *exposed, and held up to the withering indignation of a Christian community.*

Very respectfully, your obt. servt.

HIRAM O. ALDEN

Belfast, Sept. 4th, 1834.

SIR:—I have received your letter, and hasten to give you an early answer. The task is not a pleasant one, under such circumstances. No delicacy of feeling, however, shall withhold me from doing justice, as far as lies in my power, to that estimable and never-to-be-forgotten Community.

In the month of Dec. 1827, I entered the Ursuline Convent, Mt. Benedict, as a candidate for that Community. After remaining about two years, I became convinced that I had no vocation for that state of life. Having become exceedingly attached to the Lady Superior and those of her Community, I felt an unwillingness to leave. I found, however, that it was vain to think of compelling myself to remain, and immediately made known my feelings on the subject to the Lady Superior. So far from meeting with the least opposition, she replied, that, "strongly as she was attached, and dearly as she loved me, she must advise me to go, if I saw that I could not be happy there;" for, she continued, "no one can judge of that so well as yourself—it must be left to your own decision;" telling me, at the same time, that "their rules and constitutions did not allow any one to remain there, but such as found their happiness there, and *there only*." She told me that I was at liberty to go whenever I pleased, and should be provided with every thing requisite for my departure—which was done *two years* after; having remained there that length of time, merely from personal attachment to the Lady Superior, and her no less worthy Community. During my residence there (a period of four years), I can truly say, that I never saw *one* action to censure.

Their character is as unimpeachable as their conduct is pure and blameless. I can assure you, that as they appear in the parlor, so *are* they in their most unguarded moments—no unbending from that sweetness and affability of manner, which characterize them all. Every duty, both temporal and spiritual, is discharged with the greatest fidelity. The love of God and hope of heaven is the motive for every action. As teachers, nothing can exceed the care, attention and kindness, which is bestowed on *all* placed under their instruction. As persons secluded from the world and devoted to God, their purity of conversation and moral principles, their nobleness of soul, their charity, kindness, and forbearance to each other, cannot fail of being a most edifying example to those around them.

My situation in that Community was such as to render me thoroughly acquainted with every member, and every part of the house. And I solemnly assure you, that there was not the least thing existing there, that any person could disapprove, were he ever so prejudiced.

As it regards the school, I have ever recommended it to every parent, as the only *secure* place for the education of daughters in New England, or even in the United States. I say *secure*, for so I consider it, in respect to the allurements held out to a young mind, by a fascinating world, in most of the boarding-schools. With respect to Mrs. Mary John, I was there the day after her return to the Convent. I saw her in the parlor; she told me she had been very ill. At that time I knew nothing of her unfortunate departure. I found Dr. Thompson there also, who prohibited my seeing the Superior for the space of five days, in consequence of one of her eyes being dangerously affected. At the expiration of that time, I passed the day there; saw Mrs. Mary John,—who told me the particulars of her going;—said she could not realize that it was so; expressed the greatest horror at having taken such a step, and said that she would prefer death to leaving. She has been in that Community 13 years; has had the black veil 11 years. She always appeared perfectly happy, and I have no doubt but she was so, as we have had many conversations on that subject. She has told me repeatedly that she could never cease to be thankful for having been called to that happy state of life. If she had changed her mind, she had only to say so, to be *free* as I am at present. Never, I can assure you, in that Community, has there been, or can there be, according to

the rules and constitutions of the order, any *improper restraint* imposed on any person entering there. While I was a resident there, several left without the least opposition on the part of the Superior, or any other person.

As it respects the sick, nothing, I can assure you, can be further from the truth, than the assertions of that abandoned girl, (Miss Reed.) For never, in any place or by any persons, (I will not even except my own parents' house) have I received greater kindness or more attention in sickness, than during my stay in that house.

I send the answer to your second with this. The music, which accidentally fell in my way, was in possession of a Mr. James Gordon, of Charlestown; he has returned there. He said that it was picked up near the ruins. Dr. Thompson will inform you of his place of residence.

With the greatest respect, I remain, &c.

CAROLINE FRANCES ALDEN.

*Edfast, September 4th, 1834.*

SIR:—I will now proceed to give you all the information in my possession of that abandoned girl, who calls herself Miss Reed. Abandoned I think she must be, who has lost *all* regard for *truth*.

I have never yet heard one report coming from her, respecting the Ursuline Community, but the *blackest, foulest falsehood*. I may not have heard them all. Perhaps it would be well to enumerate a few — such as their *inhuman* treatment of the sick. As I said in my first letter, a more false statement, concerning that Community, *cannot be uttered*.

As I was treated there, so were others, and that was with extreme tenderness. If any were sick, they always had a physician to prescribe, and an experienced infirmarian to attend them. This same sister Mary Magdalene, of whose sufferings she has said so much, had two own sisters to attend her, in her last illness, one of whom related to me every circumstance, together with the false statements of that abandoned girl.

I am not personally acquainted with Miss Reed, having left there a few months previous to her entrance. My name there was Mrs. Mary Angela. Mrs. Mary Francis I knew well; we were there at the same time. I did not know but she was happy there; she never told me to the contrary. She was a Miss Kennedy from New-York; she is at present a Sister of Charity in Baltimore. Miss Reed remained at the Convent six months on charity; commenced her studies there between two and three years since. Her music she commenced there. And now, where is she? — *a teacher of female youth*, in what is called a respectable school!

You may make what use you please of either of these letters; I leave it entirely to your better judgment.

With much respect I remain, &c.

CAROLINE F. ALDEN

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*Certificate of Sister Mary Austin and Sister Mary Joseph, natural sisters of the late Mary Magdalene, referred to by Miss Reed.*

We, the undersigned, natural sisters of Mrs. Mary Magdalene, do hereby certify, that we were with her, from the day she entered the Convent to her decease, and are witnesses to the humanity and kindness with which she was *invariably* treated by the Superior and all the Community, particularly during

her last illness. Hereby, we likewise certify, that we were present when the last Sacraments were administered to her, and were witnesses to her calm and happy death.

SISTER MARY AUSTIN,  
SISTER MARY JOSEPH.

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*Certificate of Benedict Fenwick, Bishop of Boston.*

I certify, that I have read Miss Reed's book entitled "Six Months in a Convent," and pronounce it, so far as her statements connect me with her various relations, to be so exaggerated and distorted as to make the truth wholly lost to the sight. Her story of taking the veil is entirely a fabrication, and is against the rules and orders of the Community, which, as Bishop, I should regret to see broken. I am induced to mention this particularly, as an instance of deliberate falsehood, in which, by possibility, there could be no mistake on her part. Miss Reed left the Convent 18th January, 1832, of which fact I have certain knowledge, from memoranda made at the time. I have not the same means of knowledge as to the time of her entry.

BENEDICT FENWICK,  
*Bishop of Boston.*

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NOTE.

The "Rules of St. Augustine," and the "Institutions of the Ursuline Community," were prepared for the press, but as the Answer has extended to an unexpected length, it has been thought advisable to postpone their publication, until the other documentary evidence shall be fully prepared—so that they may be printed together. The future publications will in the same form with the present work, so that they may be bound up together.

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